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CONTENTS

NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Inter-Arab Affairs

*Arab League Turns Attention to PLO, Lebanon *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 8 Jul]* 1
Correction to Damascus Declaration Statement 1

Palestinian Affairs

Reaction to Syria's Response to Bush Proposal *[Algiers VOP]* 1
Commentary Says Israel Delaying Response to Syria *[Algiers VOP]* 2
PLO's Khuri on U.S. 'Threats' Against Iraq *[SAWT AL-SHA'B 17 Jul]* 3
Faysal al-Husayni on International Conference *[London AL-HAYAH 16 Jul]* 4

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Curfew Suspended, Normal Night Life Resumes *[Algiers TV]* 5
Ban on Marches, Gatherings in Force *[Algiers TV]* 5
FLN Central Committee in Closed Session *[Algiers TV]* 5
Ghozali Interviewed on All-Party Conference *[Algiers Radio]* 5
Two New Political Parties Created; Total Now 50 *[Algiers Radio]* 5

Egypt

'Positive' Iraqi Response to Mubarak Message *[MENA]* 5
President Mubarak Returns From Damascus Visit *[MENA]* 6
Mubarak Reviews Regional, Domestic Topics *[London AL-HAYAH 16 Jul]* 6
Al-Jihad Weapons Seized; 137 Suspects Arrested *[AL-WAFD]* 11

Libya

Al-Bishari on 'Cordial Relations' With France *[London AL-HAYA 11 Jul]* 11
RSA Reportage on Zbedi Discussing ANC, Israel *[cross-reference]* 12

Mauritania

Opposition Group Terms Referendum Results 'Void' *[AFP]* 12

Morocco

'Extraordinary Session' of Parliament 24 Jul *[Rabat Radio]* 12

Sudan

Al-Bashir Sends Congratulations to Iraq's Saddam *[Omdurman Radio]* 12
Minister Rejects 'U.S-Atlantic Threats' to Iraq *[INA]* 12
1,500 Weapons Confiscated in Darfur State *[SUNA]* 13

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Kuwait

Interior Minister on Saddam, Security *[KUNA]* 14
Army Command Calls for Surrender of Explosives *[KUNA]* 15
17 Jul Cabinet Meeting Reported *[Kuwait Radio]* 15
Reportage on Foreign Minister's Visit to Turkey *[cross-reference]* 15

IRAQ

Officers Threaten Coup If al-Rashid Executed *[London SAWT AL-KUWAYT AL-DUWALI 17 Jul]* 16
Foreign Minister on Call for Arab League Session *[INA]* 16
IAEA Officials' Recent Statements Refuted *[INA]* 16
IAEA Team Leader on Iraqi Cooperation *[INA]* 17
Negotiations With Kurds Reportedly Faltering *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 17
Sudan's al-Turabi Arrives on Visit *[INA]* 18

ISRAEL

U.S. Seen Halting Projects 'To Apply Pressure' *[Jerusalem TV]* 19
Envoys Hold 'Tense Meeting' With U.S. Official *[Jerusalem Radio]* 19
Right-Wing Parties Warn Shamir on Peace Process *[THE JERUSALEM POST 18 Jul]* 19
Shamir Seen Intent on Foiling Peace Process *[HA'ARETZ 17 Jul]* 20
3 Soldiers Killed, 4 Wounded in Lebanon Clash *[Jerusalem Radio]* 21
'Harsher' Reactions Promised *[Jerusalem TV]* 21
Commentator Favors Status Quo in South Lebanon *[HA'ARETZ 17 Jul]* 21
Insufficient Evidence Ruled in Temple Mount Case *[Jerusalem Radio]* 22
Sharon Promises Israeli Arabs Housing Rights *[THE JERUSALEM POST 16 Jul]* 22
Druze Declare Golan 'Inseparable Part of Israel' *[YEDI'OT AHARONOT 16 Jul]* 23
Alignment Submits No-Confidence Motion *[Jerusalem TV]* 23

JORDAN

King Congratulates Saddam Husayn on National Day *[Amman Radio]* 24
Deputies Express Views on Policy Statement *[Amman Radio]* 24

LEBANON

Lebanese Forces, Hizballah Exchange Detainees *[VOM]* 26
Palestinian Group To Aid in Prisoner Exchange *[AFP]* 26
Palestinians Resume Weapons Transfer to Army *[Beirut Radio]* 26
Hizballah Refuses Weapons Handover *[RFL]* 26
Israelis Reportedly Shell Iqlim al-Tuffah *[Beirut Radio]* 26
Army, Palestinians Clash in al-Buss Camp in Tyre *[VOL]* 27
Israeli 18 Jul Activity in South Detailed *[Beirut Radio]* 27
Israelis 'Attack' Civilian Car, Kill Two *[Beirut Radio]* 27
Lebanese Forces Militia Closes Overseas Offices *[Beirut Radio]* 27

SYRIA

Al-Asad, Mubarak Discuss Proposed Peace Process *[Damascus TV]* 28
Brief Press on Talks *[Damascus TV]* 28
Further on Press Meeting *[SANA]* 30
Mubarak Leaves Damascus *[SANA]* 33
Al-Asad Sets 'Wheels of Peace in Motion' *[Damascus Radio]* 34
Press Review on al-Asad's Talks With Mubarak *[Damascus Radio]* 34
Syrian Reply Gives Israel 'No Window To Escape' *[SANA]* 35

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Clashes Between Mujahidin, Kabul Forces Reported *[Islamabad Radio]* 36
Mujahidin Release Detained French Worker *[AFP]* 36
ICRC Suspends Activity Over 'Growing Incidents' *[AFP]* 36
Protest to Pakistan Over Looting of Relics *[Kabul Radio]* 36
Ministry Buys Stinger From Golboddin Forces *[Kabul Radio]* 36

India

More Arrests Made in Gandhi Assassination *[Delhi Radio]* 36
'Militancy Problem' To Be Resolved by Consensus *[Delhi Radio]* 37
Minister on Plans To End Kashmir 'Terrorism' *[Delhi Radio]* 37
Government Working To Bridge Gap With People *[Delhi Radio]* 37
Work Group Seeks Boundary Settlement With China *[Delhi International]* 37
Security Forces Kill Militant at Pakistan Border *[Delhi Radio]* 37

Iran

Rafsanjani on Importance of Skilled Work Force *[IRNA]* 37
Karrubi Assails U.S. Arms Control Plan *[IRNA]* 38
Report Says PRC To Supply Nuclear Technology
[London SAWT AL-KUWAYT AL-DUWALI 11 Jul] 38
Tehran Views Turkey's Decision on 'Poised Hammer' *[Tehran Radio]* 38
National Airlines Completes Hajj Flights *[IRNA]* 39
Afghan Opposition Efforts, Western Role Viewed *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 3 Jul]* 39
Sudanese Official Meets With Karrubi 17 Jul *[IRNA]* 40
Deputy Foreign Minister Meets Kuwaiti Envoy *[Tehran Radio]* 40
*Net Per Capita Income Drops to Less Than Half *[London KEYHAN 6 Jun]* 40
*Passenger Train Ticket Prices Increased *[London KEYHAN 20 Jun]* 41

Nepal & Bhutan

Further Reportage on Strikes in Kathmandu 41
Workers Ignore Government Threats *[AFP]* 41
Maoists March in Support of Workers *[AFP]* 41

Pakistan

Former Kashmiri Premier Rathore Released *[AFP]* 41
UN Five-Point Plan on Afghanistan Supported *[DAWN 7 Jul]* 42
Iran Formulating Regional Arms Control Plan *[IRNA]* 42
Sharif Unveils Prototype of Main Battle Tank *[Islamabad Radio]* 43

Sri Lanka

Reportage on Operations, Deaths at Elephant Pass 43
160 LTTE, 18 Soldiers Killed *[Colombo International]* 43
450 LTTE Men, 49 Soldiers Killed *[LANKAPUVATH]* 43

Inter-Arab Affairs

*Arab League Turns Attention to PLO, Lebanon

91AA0512A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 8 Jul 91 p 3

[Article: "Arab League Tries to Contain Dispute Between Lebanese Government and PLO"]

[Text] Cairo—AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Bureau—An official Arab League source has assured AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT of the success of the Arab League efforts to eliminate the causes of the recent tension in the relations between the PLO and Tunisia, where the PLO headquarters is located. After these contacts, Tunisia has underlined its eagerness for the welfare of the Palestinians living there.

The source added that the league's important role in this phase is to preserve Arab consensus regarding the Palestinian cause. This means preventing any disagreement from extending to touch the constants of the Arab policies.

The source said that all the Arab states are unanimous in rejecting any endeavor to abandon the Palestinian cause, considering that it is a pan-Arab cause whose rights must be preserved and for which internal and external security must be established.

In a related development, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that the Arab League has launched prompt efforts to contain the situation between Lebanon and the PLO. However, league sources have made no reference to the possibilities of inviting the Arab League Council to an emergency meeting to discuss this situation, either at the level of permanent delegates or of foreign ministers. The sources have been content to stress that concerted consultations and contacts have begun between the league delegates in Cairo.

In a new development, large-scale diplomatic contacts have been launched between Washington and a number of Arab capitals in this connection to prevent Arab bloodshed and to completely restrict Israeli movement in this direction.

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Libyan President Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi had received during their summit in Alexandria a message from Palestinian Chairman Yasir 'Arafat asking them to intervene to protect Palestinians living in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. This issue was a major part of the Alexandria summit agenda.

The Arab League in Cairo has received a PLO memorandum expressing the PLO's wish to end the ongoing fighting in South Lebanon and its readiness to hold a bilateral meeting with Lebanon or a tripartite meeting between the PLO, Lebanon, and Syria to end the ongoing conflicts and fighting in South Lebanon. The memorandum points out that Palestinians are convinced of Lebanese sovereignty over all Lebanese territories.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned from sources in Cairo that Arab efforts are currently being made to contain the worsening situation in South Lebanon and to stop the military activities between Lebanese Army forces and PLO fighters, and to conduct dialogue between the two sides under Arab League auspices and in accordance with the Lebanese unity accord.

These sources said that some Arab circles have warned both Lebanon and the PLO against continued military escalation so that Israel does not exploit this situation to launch new military operations in South Lebanon and to expand its security zone in the south.

The sources said that the Arab countries are trying to prevent the situation in the south from exploding as a result of clashes between army forces and Palestinian fighters and to make both sides adhere to what was agreed on during the meeting held in Cairo last May on the peripheries of the Arab foreign ministers' meeting.

The sources further noted that Egypt, Syria, and Libya, as well as the Arab League secretary general, are taking part in these efforts in light of the messages and appeals issued by Yasir 'Arafat.

Correction to Damascus Declaration Statement

LD1707105191

The following correction pertains to the item headlined "Damascus Declaration Countries Issue Statement" published in the Inter-Arab Affairs section of the 17 July Near East & South Asia DAILY REPORT on page 1:

column one, paragraph four, only sentence make read: ...1963, and in embarking on practical steps to hand back all the property and museum possessions usurped by the Iraqi regime... (rewording)

column two, paragraph four, from end of first sentence, make read: ... heir apparent, Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah. They expressed their condolences to the Kuwaiti Government and people over the righteous martyrs assassinated by the forces of aggression. They expressed their...(supplying additional sentences)

Palestinian Affairs

Reaction to Syria's Response to Bush Proposal

LD1707214291 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] U.S. President George Bush has described the Syrian response to the U.S. proposals as extraordinary progress, saying that this is what we can call extraordinary progress on the basis of the information we have. He added: We are not saying that everything is now complete and that no last-minute obstacles could come up, but we are facing the problem very positively to the extent that I have asked Secretary Baker to go immediately to the region.

Washington had previously announced that Baker would go to the Middle East as soon as the summit of the seven industrialized states is over to visit Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. Bush announced that Israel's reply to his letter will be a good test of Israel's will to negotiate with other peoples in the Middle East. Bush emphasized that Israel has not rejected the U.S. peace initiative and said: We are proceeding, while continuing to exert pressure. He pointed out that the Syrian president agreed to participate in the kind of meetings that are necessary to push the peace process forward, and this is a crucial phase—if it materializes, as he put it.

In the Zionist entity, enemy Foreign Minister David Levi announced in the Knesset last night that the head of U.S. diplomacy, James Baker, will arrive in Israel next week. He expressed hope that Baker will carry a Syrian response that reflects a radical change in Syria's position.

Unofficial Israeli sources expected Baker to come to the Middle East soon as a first result of Syria's response to the U.S. President's initiative which he had presented in his letters to Middle East leaders at the beginning of June. These sources described Syria's response as a clever step that came at the appropriate time. Its aim is to make the Tel Aviv government appear as the only obstacle on the road to peace. The sources added that the Syrian president, in a clever move, had returned the ball to the Israeli court.

The reactions of official political quarters were dominated by anger and annoyance and agreed on considering Syria's response as being negative. At the same time, government quarters expressed their fear that Washington would offer secret guarantees to Syria regarding the interpretation of Resolution 242 in exchange for its positive response, at the expense of the standing agreements between Yitzhaq Shamir and James Baker. While Shamir remained tight-lipped, preferring to wait until he had studied the full text of Syria's response, his spokesman, Avi Pazner, called on the United States to consider Syria's response as shameful behavior, having come late, and to deal with it on this basis.

The Zionist war minister, Moshe Arens, announced yesterday that Israel is ready to start direct peace talks with Syria as with any other Arab country, without preconditions. Arens believes that Syria's response to Bush's proposals could be a very encouraging sign.

The enemy's radio cited a political source as saying that Israel is threatened with becoming the only obstacle before peace. The newspaper HA'ARETZ, citing a political source, said that President Bush will put all of his weight in the balance to force Israel to agree to the presence of a UN representative at the negotiating table.

YEDI'OT AHARONOT, under the headline "The U.S.-Syrian Conspiracy," by 'Uzi Mahnaymin, commented on Syria's positive response by saying that the Syrians do not want to fight us, and they know that the consequences could be very dangerous for them. If the peace opportunity had not been exploited, however fragile it may be, the alternative would have been a fierce war. He went on to say that there are fears that cannot be minimized, namely that Israel's rejection of the peace efforts will lead the Americans, after the U.S. presidential elections, to hint to the Syrians and signal to them to start a small war against Israel by emphasizing that Washington will intervene at the appropriate time to stop the Syrians and the Israelis.

Brother Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], member of the PLO Executive Committee, considers the Syrian response as positive and very beneficial to Arab unity, that it indicates the true Arab wish to achieve peace, and that it confirms the seriousness of the Arab position toward the current peace initiative in the region. As for Brother Bassam Abu-Sharif, adviser to the brother president leader Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], he lauded Syria's response and said that it unequivocally shows that the Arab attitude as a whole toward President Bush's proposals is positive, constructive, and paves the way for a just and comprehensive peace, while Israel persists in its rejection. Brother Abu-Sharif emphasized the need to convene an Arab summit that includes the Arab parties directly concerned with the Middle East question, namely Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and the PLO.

Palestinian circles in the occupied territories believe that Syria's positive response is liable to push the United States to take tangible steps against Israel, and that it will also put the ball in the Israeli court.

Hanan Ashrawi said that Syria's response is similar to the Arab position in general and called for all Arab positions to be coordinated.

In Riyadh, the Saudis welcomed the Syrian response. A Saudi source said that Syria's positive response, in our view, emanates from the concern of the Syrian leadership for the security of the region and its stability as well as for pushing the wheel of peace forward.

In Cairo, the Egyptian foreign minister said Syria's response will push the peace steps faster than ever and added that Syria's participation is positive and its role very important. Usamah al-Baz believes that the Syrian response is being regarded as a successful positive step giving an impetus to the peace negotiations, and with this, Al-Baz says, the Arab world has taken the necessary steps and Israel should bear the responsibility for peace.

Commentary Says Israel Delaying Response to Syria

LD1807055991 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Brothers, yesterday many Arab parties welcomed the Syrian response to the latest American peace proposals on the Middle East with satisfaction. This welcome was accompanied by a strong American welcome to the extent that the U.S. President George Bush had

described it as being very positive. Some Israeli politicians found the Syrian response encouraging, as Moshe Arens had mentioned.

The Israeli initial welcome is based on the grounds that Syria had abandoned its old policy on refusal of direct negotiations with Israel, and Arens' welcome does not necessarily reflect the official position of the Israel Government at this particular stage, inasmuch as it represents the first Israeli reading of the long-awaited Syrian response.

Some believed that the Syrian response had shifted the center of pressure—be that American or international—to the Israeli side, but we believe that Israel will take some time before it declares its position. It is expected that Israel will receive Baker to hear from him, and then direct more questions and ask of him more clarifications before it commits itself to any hasty attitudes. The present Israeli Government may resort to the time factor or perhaps take refuge in using internal Israeli politics and the structure of the coalition government. That is to say one party might withdraw from the government, or the prime minister might submit his resignation to the state president in the coming period.

The coming period is full of surprises that are susceptible to political analysis and the reading of the future. No doubt there is an activation of the political movement in the Middle East, but it is not within our ability to judge at present that the political solution has become only a whisker away.

PLO's Khuri on U.S. 'Threats' Against Iraq

JN1707153491 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 17 Jul 91, pp 17, 20

[By Riyad Mansur]

[Text] Bishop Iliya Khuri, member of the PLO Executive Committee, has condemned the U.S. threats against Iraq and its disdain of the Arab and Islamic nations. He said the United States is arrogantly challenging all Arab states.

In an exclusive statement to SAWT AL-SHA'B, Khuri said the real U.S. intentions toward the Arabs were evident in the U.S. President's statement that threatened Iraq with the return of the so-called Desert Storm. Replying to a question, he said this U.S. position is a new evidence of hostility toward anything that is Arab, adding that the U.S. Administration is again proving its flagrant support for and bias toward Israel at the expense of Arab rights.

He said current Arab conditions encourage any official, whether American or European, to make all sorts of statements. He added his hope that these stances would trigger our ability to reply. He stressed that if the Arab position were strong, others would not have dared to theorize and to encroach on Arab causes.

Bishop Khuri added: We, whether governments or the PLO, are all required to reply to the U.S. Administration's stances, which are not new. We are certain that U.S. officials want to liquidate the Palestinian cause, thus giving us reason to suspect and mistrust the U.S. promises.

He said: We have reached a stage where stances have become very clear and where the limits and capabilities of each of us have been defined. We have to reply to the U.S. proposals.

Replying to another question, he said he is not optimistic about the possibility of establishing an acceptable peace in the region because there are no signs of change in the international position toward Israeli aggression. He added: Israel is continuing its intransigence, but I am optimistic that the Palestinian people will continue to stick to their rights and will not cede them regardless of the challenges.

On the talks held two days ago between His Majesty King Husayn and PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, he said the talks reflected the two sides' sincerity and profound feeling of the need to undertake joint action in any future political settlement.

He added that highest-level dialogue between Jordan and Palestine will not stop and that issues surfacing from time to time will be clearly and frankly debated. He said: We and Jordan are in one trench. We have a common enemy and destiny. He also pointed out that Jordan is firm in its stance on Arab rights.

Khuri said: Under the current deteriorating Arab situation, I do not believe that any solution to the Palestine question would do justice to our cause and our rights. He said inter-Arab cooperation is the basis for imposing any solution, pointing out that if economic and political capabilities were employed, we would be able to tip some balances in our favor.

Bishop Khuri added that the Palestinian cause is a complex one, but a unified Arab position would remove many of the reasons complicating it. He pointed out that the Arabs should close ranks because Israel wants to usurp more Arab territory and impose its hegemony over the whole region.

On the Syrian reply to President Bush's plan, he said: We have not received the details of the plan yet, but signs indicate that Israel has been cornered, despite the Israeli Prime Minister's rejection.

The PLO Executive Committee member called on the frontline states—Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and the PLO—to take a unified position toward the current issues as a first step toward reunifying the Arab ranks.

Answering a question on the present Egyptian-Palestinian rapprochement, he said: We hope there will be Palestinian-Egyptian and Palestinian-Syrian rapprochements. We as Palestinians hope for rapprochement among all Arab countries on the bases of antagonizing Israel and the U.S. plans

targeting Arab interests. The current Israeli and U.S. provocations against a number of Arab countries indicate that the Palestinians are not the only target. This requires collective confrontation efforts.

Bishop Khuri said: We are confident that Israeli forces will not withdraw from Southern Lebanon by a decision taken behind closed doors or by secret deals. It will not withdraw from Lebanon, the West Bank, or the Gaza Strip without the continued serious and persistent international pressure. Otherwise, fighting against it remains the only option.

Concluding, the PLO Executive Committee member said the political circumstances and the serious hazards surrounding the PLO and the Palestinian people, and the plots being concocted by the United States, Zionism, and some quarters in Europe with the aim of liquidating the cause and ignoring our legitimate rights will prompt the Palestinian leadership to agree to a solid national program aimed at aborting these plans.

Faysal al-Husayni on International Conference

PM1807084091 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Jul 91 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Al-Husayni Tells AL-HAYAH: Settlement Very Imminent"]

[Excerpt] Paris—Faysal al-Husayni, director of the Arab Studies Center in occupied Jerusalem, believes that the settlement of matters regarding convening the international conference is now very imminent. In a statement to AL-HAYAH in Paris while on his way back from Washington where he met with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, al-Husayni added: "We know that Israel is placing all possible obstacles in the way of convening such a conference, including some impossible conditions designed to prevent the Palestinians from taking part in it and to put the blame for the conference's failure on them."

He also said: "We want the peace process to continue, but at the same time we want rules that will prevent Israel from securing exclusive control of the results of such negotiations."

Al-Husayni pointed out that this requires "more U.S. clarity about the substance of the negotiations and about the topics to be raised in them, otherwise we will be forced to take a position whereby we would insist that Palestinian participation be very clear and unaffected by the substance of the subject matter."

Asked whether he sensed some development of the U.S. position after his recent meeting with Baker, al-Husayni said: "I believe that the Americans fully understand our need for assurances and a clarification of the question of the substance. We hope that they will take a step that will enable us to be flexible on the representation issue. [passage omitted]

Algeria

Curfew Suspended; Normal Night Life Resumes

LD1707193691 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The curfew has been suspended since midnight last night. Normal night life has thus returned to the Algerian street. The military command has called on citizens to be disciplined and responsible, the two characteristics that led to the suspension of the curfew.

This summer, like all other summers, there are plenty of wedding parties, banquets, movement, and activities throughout the night and citizens are now in a better position to organize their timetable with much more optimism. Matters of public security, however, are still under the strenuous observation of those tasked to look after them, and they are the responsibility of everyone.

Ban on Marches, Gatherings in Force

LD1707195491 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The military authority in charge of administering the state of siege said in a statement this evening that, to avoid any mistakes which could have grave repercussions, the suspension of the curfew which began at 0000 hours does not mean that the ban on all public marches, assemblies, and gatherings on roads or public areas has been lifted. The military authority points out that this ban remains in force and that any violation will be firmly put down.

FLN Central Committee in Closed Session

LD1707231591 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Excerpt] An ordinary session with an extraordinary agenda: The National Liberation Front [FLN] Central Committee may consider the question of the Political Bureau, the secretary-general,and the crisis of the democratic process. Our correspondent [name indistinct] reports:

[Correspondent] The FLN Central Committee is in ordinary session at the Club des Pins. The session is closed. It is known, however, that the dicussions are focusing on the two reports prepared by the political and organizational committees. Before endorsing them there will be interventions and debates. These, it is said, will be characterized by seriousness and may become heated, and will clarify the Front's political views in the country's political situation, which requires the adoption of stands on the FLN's aspirations—stands which will fill the vacuum in the national political arena under the shadow of party competition.

Perhaps it will set an example by virtue of its experience in political field work and thus allow the democratic experiment in the country to succeed. The prevailing impression among the participants is that many of the party's and the Central Committee's organizational affairs will be amended. [passage omitted]

Ghozali Interviewed on All-Party Conference

LD1707114491 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] In an interview to be published today in the Brussels newspaper LIBRE-BELGIQUE, Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali stated that a national conference will be held soon in which all parties will participate, including the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS]. Mr. Ghozali said that he distinguishes between FIS as a party, and some of its leaders who have chosen a closed road. Ghozali said that the solution does not lie in banning certain parties, but in eliminating the situations which enable some political leaders to exploit them. He pointed out that conditions for lifting the state of siege have not yet been fulfilled. Last Friday's events were nothing but a sign that there are Algerians who have not abandoned the imposition of the law of the street, he declared.

Two New Political Parties Created; Total Now 50

LD1807090591 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1800 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Two new political parties have been created. They are the Popular Forces Front [Front des Forces Populaires], whose headquarters is in Birkhadem [district of Algiers]; the second is the Algerian National Rally [Rassemblement National Algerien], with offices at Djenane Hassani estate [Algiers suburb]. With these two parties already legalized by the Interior Ministry, fifty parties in all exist today in the nation's political life.

Egypt

'Positive' Iraqi Response to Mubarak Message

NC1807061391 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2230 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Cairo, 17 Jul (MENA)—MENA has learned that President Husni Mubarak's message to Iraqi President Saddam Husayn has been conveyed to the Iraqi leadership through Sa'id Kamal, Palestinian ambassador in Cairo.

MENA has also learned that Yasir 'Arafat brought the Iraqi reply to President Mubarak's message during his stopover at Cairo Airport while traveling from Jordan to Tunisia. 'Arafat's plane stopped at Cairo airport for one hour early on 16 July.

This is President Mubarak's 33d message to President Saddam. President Mubarak warned the Iraqi leader of the consequences of his failure to respond to UN efforts to inspect Iraq's nuclear installations. The Iraqi reply was positive.

President Mubarak Returns From Damascus Visit

NC1707183391 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1820 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Excerpt] Cairo, 17 Jul (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak returned to Cairo from Damascus at 2045 today ending a 10-hour visit to Syria, during which he held talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. [passage omitted]

Mubarak Reviews Regional, Domestic Topics

PM1707112891 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Jul 91 p 5

[Interview with President Husni Mubarak by Chief Editor Jihad Bassam al-Khazin on 14 July in Alexandria]

[Text] [Al-Khazin] We begin by asking you about security arrangements in the Gulf, the Damascus Declaration and proposed amendments to it, and the basis for these.

[Mubarak] The Gulf's security must stem from the Gulf itself. Nobody can dictate a security plan to strong states. You could imagine yourself in that position if, God forbid, something like that did happen. I would not like anyone to impose a plan on me. Such a plan would have to come from me, from my principles, my ideas, and my method. If, in consulting with some states, I found that they had ideas beneficial to me, I would take them.

As for the Damascus Declaration, it contains some simple words. We say that it does not entail the permanent presence of such states as Egypt and Syria in the Gulf. No, that is not what is required, but we say that those two states are major states with great armies and are capable of helping when there is danger. The foundation is there. That foundation is the relevant umbrella, namely, the Economic Cooperation Agreement and the Arab Joint Defense Pact. People are making a lot of noise about the Damascus Declaration.

[Al-Khazin] If it is not possible to have troops there, could Egypt and Syria leave arms in the area to be used when necessary? Is there such an idea?

[Mubarak] That too would basically depend on the Gulf states. If they wished to stockpile arms for use by our forces, then they would come to some agreement with Egypt and Syria, and we are willing. If they wanted forces because of some danger threatening them, then we would cooperate with them. They, too, have armies. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a good army and is raising its standard, but if the threat is bigger than their forces—and that could happen to any state—then these states could seek our help on a basis specified by them, with arms already in store or with an army and weapons. People are making a big issue of this. All states cooperate in matters of defense.

[Al-Khazin] But what amendments to the Damascus Declaration are there in circulation?

[Mubarak] There are no amendments, but a couple of words will be added. That is to say, for example, that if the states that signed the Damascus Declaration agreed on something publicly, we would not have to discuss it within the Arab League. That would prevent other states from objecting.

[Al-Khazin] I imagine that when you say that Gulf security depends on the Gulf states, you mean the Arab states in the Gulf. How do you view Iran's role in Gulf security as a whole?

[Mubarak] The Gulf states can assess how to cooperate with Iran on the Gulf's security. That is up to them. Security does not necessarily mean war or forces or armies. It could be many kinds of cooperation to make the Gulf secure.

[Al-Khazin] But as an essential state in the Gulf security concept, Egypt's view will be equivalent to the role it plays. You are now saying that Iran's role is not necessarily a military one. What, specifically, is your view?

[Mubarak] I cannot talk about Iran.

[Al-Khazin] I do not want you to talk about Iran, but rather about Egypt's role.

[Mubarak] I speak for Egypt. I cannot say that I am ruling out one state or another. That is not my business. It is the business of the Gulf states.

[Al-Khazin] But Egypt prefers the Gulf's security to be in Arab hands. Is that not so?

[Mubarak] That is up to them (the Gulf states). I do not want to say something that would create problems for the Gulf states or drive a wedge between them and Iran.

I have to be frank and leave it to them to consult and deliberate. It is up to them to assess Iran's role in the Gulf's security. That is not my responsibility.

[Al-Khazin] I am asking what advice you would give the Gulf states.

[Mubarak] But advice is not given in the press.

[Al-Khazin] Have you given any unannounced advice?

[Mubarak] Of course. We discuss many things with the Arab brothers without announcing them.

[Al-Khazin] Yesterday you had some advice for President Saddam Husayn about Iraq's nuclear capabilities.

[Mubarak] My advice is very clear and very flexible. I say to him, reconsider the situation and make whatever decision you deem fit to avert more military strikes... I leave it to him. I do not say to him, do this and do that... He is free. I tell him, cooperate with your commands... There is such a thing as assessment in military affairs.

If I were hiding any information, I would have to consider whether that information could be discovered through advanced reconnaissance and intelligence

methods. No action can be taken, but if the information is discovered, what would the result be? They could be destroyed and more things could be hit.

[Al-Khazin] Your words remind me of the advice you gave Saddam Husayn before the war. If he had listened, it would not have come to this state of affairs.

[Mubarak] I addressed to him 32 appeals, suggestions, written messages, and verbal messages. I addressed him sincerely and not as a gesture of support for the United States or any other state. I say to him: Sir, please, avoid ... When Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir saw that the world was about to go up in flames, he agreed to a cease-fire and accepted the Rogers plan, because he feared for his country. This is not a matter to be rash about. Rashness leads to disaster.

[Al-Khazin] I believe it is difficult for Iraq to return to the Arab fold at present. Could you possibly sit down and negotiate with Saddam Husayn?

[Mubarak] It is difficult at present.

[Al-Khazin] Can you imagine the situation with Iraq returning to normal with Saddam still there?

[Mubarak] Speaking for myself, I say, by God, it is difficult to deal with him, because I was stabbed in the back. He promised me that he would not do something, but he did it. He found people to confirm that he made no such promise. Although they were not present at our meeting, they were sure that he said that he would not do anything until the Jeddah meeting. That never happened at all. What stuns me is that highly placed people are saying that. Some of them are now saying: We do not regret all that we did, and what we said was correct. Let them speak out frankly, and I will reply. What has happened has happened, and they should keep quiet. I hope they do not open these doors. They should keep quiet and draw the curtain. If anyone publishes a white book or a red book, I will publish a black book. Very strange!

[Al-Khazin] Another question about Iraq. It concerns the imposed sanctions which are hurting the Iraqi people who neither elected Saddam Husayn nor know how to get rid of him. I would ask you about Egypt's position regarding the famine affecting Iraqi children. Is there a way of punishing Saddam Husayn without punishing the Iraqi people?

[Mubarak] We are not punishing the Iraqi people. The Iraqi regime is punishing them. The world stands against that regime. Well, what could we do? Tell the permanent members to lift the sanctions against Iraq? They would say "no." What could we do?

[Al-Khazin] What is the solution?

[Mubarak] They have the solution. The Iraqi leadership knows the cause of the Iraqi people's plight and it should make the appropriate decision. In 1967, when Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir was hit, he resigned, but the people—all the people in the republic, not just in Cairo—insisted that he stay. He really wanted to step down.

[Al-Khazin] But to this day Saddam still says that he was victorious.

[Mubarak] Of course, there are these victories and birthday parties!

[Al-Khazin] Mr. President, you said a few moments ago that you addressed 32 appeals to Saddam Husayn but that he did not listen. Do you believe he will heed your appeal this time?

[Mubarak] I will not go into details and I do not know what the other (big) states intend to do. If I were the Iraqi president I would have to make my calculations very carefully and I would not expose myself to more danger. What has already happened is enough. He was cautioned a hundred times. I had told him that the U.S. President said that he would liberate Kuwait, and the alliance states said that Kuwait must be liberated and their forces were there. Would these forces conceivably have withdrawn without liberating Kuwait?

Everyone would have fallen. All the leaders of these states would have fallen if, having said that they would liberate Kuwait, they returned without doing anything. They would have been lying to their peoples. Ugly campaigns would have been launched against them and they would have been brought down. A president who says something appreciates the situation, and if he makes a decision he implements it. I wish we could be like that.

[Al-Khazin] Wishful thinking is something quite different. We wish all the UN resolutions could be implemented, not just the resolutions against Iraq. We have noticed that Egypt has made some great statements about Palestinian rights. How do you view the situation now?

[Mubarak] The Palestinian question is more complex and long-standing. It is regrettable that, when the Palestinian problem began in 1948 and many initiatives were made, we rejected everything. Partition was rejected. Now we bewail the fact. A few years ago we began accepting what we had rejected many years before. We will continue to be stubborn until the West Bank and Gaza are finished! Settlements are being built and will cover the land. Then the process will be more complicated.

[Al-Khazin] We have heard of Egyptian efforts to promote a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. Could you comment on that?

[Mubarak] What efforts? If I am to make efforts, what about the other parties? We made efforts before, but they were rejected. I will give you an example. (President Anwar) al-Sadat once suggested to Begin that they [Israelis] withdraw from Gaza as an example for the future, and Begin said he would think about it. Al-Sadat was called the most horrible names and was accused of partitioning Palestinian territory. In 1983, after al-Sadat's death, Yasir 'Arafat asked me to speak for him and to ask for Gaza, but that matter had passed and was

gone. That is what is known as lost opportunities. There were many opportunities. They attacked Egypt over Camp David and claimed that it was a unilateral solution. Well, it was a twofold process. There was the Egyptian aspect of it. We had to get our territory back to be able to stand on firm ground. I have a population of 55 million who want to live, so do not throw me into a whirlpool. The other aspect was the Palestinian aspect. We started autonomy negotiations and were continuously attacked. If we had continued with the negotiations on autonomy, which we cannot have today, the issue would have crystallized and autonomy would have been achieved, then independence would have been sought, followed by a confederation. The process cannot be completed in a single leap. Now when we ask Mr. Shamir—who had rejected peace, Camp David, and everything—to implement Camp David, he tells me, no, there is a new order now. That is the problem; if one agrees and the other rejects, and vice versa.

[Al-Khazin] Why should weapons of mass destruction be eliminated only from Iraq?

[Mubarak] I told the Iraqi president when we met with Egyptian and Iraqi reporters in Baghdad and discussed chemical warfare—I said that I was requesting that the entire region be free from weapons of mass destruction: all states without exception. In my speech to the Egyptian People's Assembly I said that I was still demanding the elimination of weapons of mass destruction from all states of the region, including Israel.

[Al-Khazin] Do you agree with us that the U.S. peace efforts have reached a dead end?

[Mubarak] Some efforts are still being made. The process was suspended pending President Hafiz al-Asad's reply. I believe the reply will be sent today (Sunday). I was talking to President al-Asad about it.

[Al-Khazin] Is there anything for publication in what you talked about?

[Mubarak] No. I do not have the reply and I would not be able to give it to you even if I did have it. Ask the state which has prepared it. But I have held talks with President al-Asad. There in Syria he cannot draw up the reply himself. It must be discussed at very high levels in the party.

[Al-Khazin] According to our Damascus bureau, the reply is positive.

[Mubarak] By God, I trust President al-Asad and I believe that his reply is flexible. In other words, the ball is now in Shamir's court. I still say, sir, we are not against Likud and in favor of Labor, as they claim. Likud and Labor are both Israel. No party is going to come from there and tell me, we are with you against Israel or we are with the Arabs against Israel.

[Al-Khazin] Relations with Syria seem good these days. You had a slogan, "Hands Off Lebanon." Has the treaty affected your attitude toward Syria, particularly since some U.S. congressmen are claiming that Lebanon has become a Syrian colony, an excuse to attack Syria?

[Mubarak] As long as they (Syria and Lebanon) are willingly in agreement on the treaty, I do not interfere. I do not believe that Syria sees Lebanon as a Syrian colony. Is the treaty not better than having Lebanon as a stage for settling scores between Arab states until Lebanon is lost?

After the war, and with Iraq's withdrawal from Lebanon, the situation has calmed down. It is strange; I do not understand why we have to fight among ourselves on Lebanese territory. The "Hands Off Lebanon" slogan was meant for Syria, Iraq, and many other states playing on the Lebanese stage. Thank God, stability is beginning to return to Lebanon, on the way to restoring Lebanon to the way it was—an independent state.

[Al-Khazin] Do you believe the treaty has contributed to stability?

[Mubarak] Not the treaty. The move toward stability was started by the Lebanese parties themselves, before the treaty.

[Al-Khazin] What is Egypt's role in helping the Lebanese legitimate authorities?

[Mubarak] I do that in many ways.

[Al-Khazin] Such as?

[Mubarak] You mean, in what way. I will leave it at that for now. We cannot tell the press everything now.

[Al-Khazin] Let us leave relations with Syria and move to something else. We have heard that President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, King Husayn, and Yasir 'Arafat may visit Egypt. Are there contacts with them?

[Mubarak] There are contacts with King Husayn. He contacted me several times, and I replied to him. When the leader of an Arab state talks to me I cannot refuse to answer him. Arab traditions prevent me from doing that. But this does not mean that we should change our opinion, plan, and principles. We are not not changing at all, nor are we deviating from the main line that we have established.

[Al-Khazin] Did you advise them to change their positions?

[Mubarak] Who?

[Al-Khazin] Those who supported Iraq, such as King Husayn and Yasir 'Arafat. We noticed that Egypt strongly defended Palestinian rights last time.

[Mubarak] Yes. And today (Sunday) our foreign minister will meet with Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas]. The dialogue with the Palestinians is continuing and does not stop, because the Palestinian issue is not the exclusive province of 'Arafat or anyone else. It is an issue of the whole people, and Egypt has worked from the outset to ensure that the Palestinian issue is the issue of a people and a state, not a question of refugees.

[Al-Khazin] Is it likely that Egypt could provide a channel for these states' return to the Arab group—the existing group of six or eight?

[Mubarak] It is not easy for them to return, and the Iraq operation has not ended yet. Some of them say: No, we were in the right. How can they be in the right? We Arabs have the fault that we say one thing in public and another in private. In private they say, it was a black period and we would like to forget it. In public they say, we were in the right. And I do not like two-faced people at all.

[Al-Khazin] How would you describe Egyptian-Saudi relations?

[Mubarak] Relations with Saudi Arabia are unblemished, my relationship with King Fahd is very good, there is understanding on all issues, and cooperation is proceeding in the best possible way.

[Al-Khazin] Arab or international cooperation?

[Mubarak] We coordinate on everything, contacts are continuing between us and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and there is no possibility of any shocks.

[Al-Khazin] Lieutenant al-Bashir told AL-HAYAH two days ago that the cause of tension in Sudan's relations with Egypt is the announcement of integration between Sudan and Libya. What has happened with regard to the Libyan mediation between you and Sudan?

[Mubarak] With due respect to brother Lt. Gen. al-Bashir, relations between Egypt and Sudan did not become tense as a result of integration with Libya. I encourage President Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi (to work for integration). But Lt. Gen. al-Bashir is a good man, and the problem lies not with al-Bashir, but with those who are behind him—with (Hasan) al-Turabi [National Islamic Front leader]. Al-Turabi is playing a dangerous game, and he must realize that his game has been exposed. It is al-Turabi who is causing the problems. He thinks that he can spread his destructive principles throughout the world. His tricks have extended as far as the Arab Maghreb states, and he wants to extend them to certain people here from al-Jihad organizations, but we are watching them closely. This is why we prevent some elements from entering Egypt, because they belong to al-Turabi. It was he who drove (Ja'far) Numayri to pass laws that he called Islamic, but were not. Now he is behind all the "explosive" operations between Sudan and all the other states. He—not Lt. Gen. al-Bahsir—was behind the support for Iraq in its occupation of Kuwait. Al-Bashir is a good man, but it is the other one who is performing his tricks behind the scenes, and we are aware of this.

[Al-Khazin] I believe that he justifies support for Iraq's occupation of Kuwait by his desire to see the collapse of the Arab regimes and the establishment of the Islamic political tendency sponsored by him.

[Mubarak] Is he concerned about the collapse of the Arab regimes? His prime concern should be the regime in his own country. How can someone whose own country is declining work for the sake of others? Why do you interfere in others' business? What Islamic tendency is it? We are proceeding very well and know our principles and everything.

[Al-Khazin] Have any contacts been made with Algeria, especially after the problems President Chadli Bendjedid has experienced at the hands of the Islamic groups?

[Mubarak] I spoke with President Bendjedid and will be meeting with the Algerian foreign minister later, after you leave.

[Al-Khazin] How would you assess the danger of the Islamic groups?

[Mubarak] We will not ignore any of them. They are extremists and terrorists, and Islam is not like that. Islam is a religion of tolerance, love, and brotherhood, not a religion of violence and the use of armed forces. These things exist in all world states. They are all terrorist operations. We have called them Islamic groups, but they are not Islamic. They are terrorist groups that have nothing to do with Islam.

[Al-Khazin] Is the weakness of the Sudanese parties' structures strengthening the Islamic groups?

[Mubarak] In the past there was no extremism or anything else. Extremism started to emerge with the emergence of parties. Every party is following them to make some gains, as you know. But they are all losing, and we will never be lax in dealing with such actions. The time will come when we will deal with those who are backing them, just to let them know that.

[Al-Khazin] Can we return now to relations with Libya and Colonel al-Qadhdhafi's attempt to mediate between Egypt and Sudan, and Egypt's attempt to improve Libya's image abroad?

[Mubarak] Our relations with Libya and Col. al-Qadhdhafi are very good. The man is pursuing a very good line. This is why I am talking to the European states and the United States and saying that the man has abandoned many of the things that prompted criticism. The major states still say that there is still a danger, but I say: Gentlemen, not to such a great extent. We must give them (the Libyans) some hope. We must give him some hope through cooperation so that conditions will become favorable for stable, cordial relations.

[Al-Khazin] Will you talk about Libya with the British during your coming visit, since they lead the campaign against Col. al-Qadhdhafi?

[Mubarak] I will talk with him and with them, but such things take a long time.

[Al-Khazin] Will you raise the subject during the visit?

[Mubarak] No. This visit is not the right time. Before the visit representatives will go there and others come here. We also send messages, and the process is continuing.

[Al-Khazin] What is your position on the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC] now?

[Mubarak] It sends you its regards. It is still there.

[Al-Khazin] It has not been dissolved but has been frozen.

[Mubarak] Leave it in the museum for a little while.

[Al-Khazin] Leave it? So it exists.

[Mubarak] It exists on paper. Originally I was not convinced about it. I did not want it. But I found that it was their wish and said, let us see what it is about.

[Al-Khazin] You previously said that you accepted on King Husayn's insistence.

[Mubarak] King Husayn was behind it, and I had a feeling that there was something unnatural about it. He did not understand the council's structure. I did not know what its aim was. We discussed two important points: defense and security. What defense and security? We have an agreement within the Arab League. There were always doubts. And we had to take every step with extreme care, because I did not want to implicate my country. My people have granted me their confidence and I must safeguard it. This is why I tried to understand what benefit they would derive and what benefit I would derive. Will they benefit and I lose, or not? If there is a loss, I will keep away from them.

[Al-Khazin] But the ACC was set up, despite these doubts. Does this mean that its positive aspects outweighed its negative aspects at the time?

[Mubarak] No. When I agreed to sign on in February 1987, I did so because King Husayn told me that the two points with which I did not agree would be left out.

[Al-Khazin] Security and defense?

[Mubarak] Security and defense. What can I say? All the other things were ordinary cooperation. When we met in Alexandria to sign the charter they raised the two points, so I said: I will not sign. When I enter into an agreement I must be convinced of it so that I can convince citizens and the people's representatives that such an action is in their interests.

[Al-Khazin] Do you support Eritrea's independence?

[Mubarak] Let them agree among themselves on this subject. I do not want to give an opinion beforehand. If they agree on its independence, fine. If they agree on federal rule, fine. It is for the parties concerned to decide. Eritrea is not a single group; it is several organizations, and whatever they agree on will be welcomed by us. It is not in our interests to drive a wedge between one organization and another.

[Al-Khazin] But the Horn of Africa is strategically important to Egypt for access to the Red Sea.

[Mubarak] We are watching the region closely, and we are by no means far away from it. But this does not mean that I should state an opinion that conflicts with the Eritrean organizations' stances. We are against interference in any state's internal affairs.

[Al-Khazin] But Israel is interfering in the Horn of Africa. Do you fear that this could affect Egypt's strategic interests?

[Al-Khazin] Look, Israel or anyone else... I will not keep silent about any interference that affects Egypt. This is in general, without going into details.

[Al-Khazin] We felt that relations with Kuwait were fluctuating. What is their status now?

[Mubarak] Nothing: Kuwait was fragmented. They were complaining about one another, and everyone was driving a wedge against the other. Some one says such and such about Kuwait, then someone else says something else. This happened among the Kuwaitis themselves. Then I went there and I told them: We have a moral commitment to help you with security if you want. But there are no bad relations between us and Kuwait.

[Al-Khazin] They have commitments to Egypt. Have they fulfilled them?

[Mubarak] They are fulfilling them, and there is no problem.

[Al-Khazin] How would you assess the Egyptian economy in view of the promises that you would be granted loans totalling $8 billion?

[Mubarak] The loans total not $8 billion, but $3 billion: about $1 billion in the form of grants and the rest in the form of loans with a facility [as published] of 1 or 0.5 percent. But this does not mean that I should go and spend. No... Any loans must be secured through a draft law approved by the People's Assembly, and there must be an extreme need for it. Any loans must be productive. If you take, you must give. Our disaster is the growing population and rising prices. Prices are soaring. If your consumption is high, you will have no surplus hard currency. So consumption must be reduced.

[Al-Khazin] Finally, a personal question: Your present term will end in two years. Will you renew it?

[Mubarak] I have not thought about this at all. The work is exhausting, difficult, and a terrifying responsibility. I regard what I have been doing for 10 years as hard labor. But I am happy as long as I achieve success for people and the country. I work daily from about 0700 to 2200, with not a single day off. I have been like this all my life. Since I joined the service in 1949, I have taken three months off, but only on paper. Actually, I have taken only 45 days.

[Al-Khazin] Shall I write that President Mubarak will continue?

[Mubarak] I cannot tell you. Some presidents are happy to continue. But as Egypt's president I tell you that the emergency law applies against me alone: I have been affected by the emergency law since I took office. I am locked up inside four walls. Where can I go? I cannot walk in the streets. I cannot go shopping. It is one of life's joys to be able to walk in the streets and buy what you like. I cannot move.

[Al-Khazin] Will the first lady tell you to continue or not?

[Mubarak] For my family's part, they did not want me to continue last time.

Al-Jihad Weapons Seized; 137 Suspects Arrested

NC1807082791 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 15 Jul 91 p 9

[Najwa 'Abd-al-'Aziz report]

[Excerpts] The al-Qalyubiah Governorate intelligence organs and state intelligence organs have seized an arsenal of automatic weapons and a number of grenades from two secret arms depots. Investigations have revealed that the two depots belonged to five members of the extremist al-Jihad organization who were arrested along with 132 others who also used the depots. The seized weapons have been sent to the forensic laboratory for examination, and the defendants have been referred to the relevant prosecution office for interrogation. [passage omitted]

During the operation, the al-Qalyubiah intelligence organs raided the areas of Tukh, Shibin al-Qanatir, and al-Khankah and arrested the five al-Jihad organization members who owned the two secret weapons caches in the Tukh and al-Khankah areas. The intelligence organs discovered five automatic rifles, 60 Russian-made handguns, 61 locally made shotguns, 111 revolvers, one large Grinev handgun, and a number of boxes filled with explosives. The detained members of al-Jihad are Jabir Salim Khadr, Ahmad 'Abd-al-Sami' al-Hudaybi, Hasan Salam Salam, Sa'd al-Sayyid Abu-'Ali, and Sami Farahat 'Arfah. Another 132 were arrested and referred to the state prosecutor when it was determined that they had met with the five detained persons.

Libya

Al-Bishari on 'Cordial Relations' With France

PM1207104091 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 11 Jul 91 p 4

[Randah Taqiy-al-Din report: "Following Talks With French Foreign Minister, Al-Bishari Emphasizes to AL-HAYAH Collapse of European Embargo"]

[Text] Paris—Ibrahim al-Bishari, Libyan secretary of the General People's Committee for External Liaison and International Cooperation, said in a statement to AL-HAYAH that his current private visit to France lies in the framework of the "cordial relations" between the countries and the continuing dialogue between them.

Al-Bishari, who spoke following a meeting with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, added that their talks broached the possibility of convening the Libyan-French joint higher committee in October or November. He said that Dumas' visit to Libya a few weeks ago was characterized by total success and that "we agreed to continue the dialogue between our countries" following the visit. He pointed out that the Libyan-French committee's meeting will be preceded by a visit to Paris by the Libyan economic planning minister to conclusively determine the fields of bilateral cooperation between the countries.

He expressed his belief that Libya can benefit from French technology in the field of drilling and exploring for oil and also in the field of electricity. There are also other areas of cooperation, such as the automobile industry, "and we are now busy setting up a car factory in Libya to cover the needs of Egypt and the Arab Maghreb." He said that his talks with Dumas also broached conditions in the Mediterranean and Africa in general, and that it was agreed to continue meetings between the countries' officials.

Regarding French press reports of the possibility of Judge Bruguiere's asking "Interpol" to issue an arrest warrant against a number of Libyan officials including Musa Kusa, al-Bishari said that he did not discuss it with Dumas because "this matter is not important enough for us to discuss. I know that quarters hostile to our country are behind this, and these quarters may not be French. They might be Zionist or belong to some U.S. circles."

He expressed his belief that there are known reasons for this campaign, namely "to spread harmful propaganda whenever they feel that our relations with a certain country are improving." He also said: "Anyway, we are totally satisfied that this issue is baseless and we have confidence in the impartiality of the French judiciary so let the judiciary perform its task." He expressed his surprise that the press has issued verdicts in this case, which is still before the judiciary. He regarded this as an instance of the press "standing above" the judiciary.

Regarding French efforts to lift the European embargo against Libya, al-Bishari said that "the European embargo has collapsed automatically since our relations with 11 of the 12 EEC states are excellent. They are not applying these measures against us. That leaves only only Britain, and we have tried to express good intentions toward it, but it has responded to us with reservations. Nevertheless, we are open to dialogue."

AL-HAYAH has learned from authoritative French sources that France's policy is currently moving toward improving relations and developing its economic ties with Libya, especially since the French presence in Libya

is only 300 people, whereas there are some 7,000 Americans and 4,000 Britons there. The sources said that France intends to strengthen its economic presence in Libya and that Dumas is active within the EEC with a view to lifting the embargo imposed by the European states against Libya.

RSA Reportage on Zbedi Discussing ANC, Israel

WA1807114591

For South African reportage on the 14 July interview with Abdalla Zbedi, Libyan Foreign Relations deputy secretary, by South African Broadcasting Corporation reporter John Bishop in Johannesburg, please see the South Africa (RSA) section of the 17 July issue of the Sub-Saharan Africa DAILY REPORT.

Mauritania

Opposition Group Terms Referendum Results 'Void'

AB1707215591 Paris AFP in French 1755 GMT 15 Jul 91

[Text] Dakar, 15 Jul (AFP)—The African Liberation Forces of Mauritania (FLAM, opposition black African movement) has stated in a communique delivered today to the press that it considers the results of the constitutional referendum in Mauritania as "freakish and the consultation as arbitrary, untimely, and void." The draft constitution submitted for referendum on Friday was adopted by a vote of more than 95 percent, according to official results.

The FLAM says that the draft constitution was submitted to a referendum unilaterally by the government, which refused to associate with the opposition as a whole or to authorize the return of deported Mauritanians or those in exile. Furthermore, the FLAM continues, the referendum took place in an atmosphere of police violence and intimidation by the authorities against black Mauritanians.

In its communique, the FLAM "calls on all progressive forces to mobilize and remain vigilant to oppose any attempts by the regime aimed at leading the democratic process astray."

Morocco

'Extraordinary Session' of Parliament 24 Jul

LD1707171591 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The speaker of the House of Representatives informs all the deputies that the House will hold an extraordinary session in conformity with the stipulations of Article 39 of the Constitution at the request of all the parliamentary groups and political parties which constitute the House. The session will be held on 24 July 1991 at 1500. This session will be devoted to the issue of national mobilization to face up to conspiracies and challenges against the country's sovereignty and territorial unity.

Sudan

Al-Bashir Sends Congratulations to Iraq's Saddam

EA1707213091 Omdurman Sudan Broadcasting Service Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, chairman of the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and the Council of Ministers, has sent a cable congratulating His Excellency President Saddam Husayn, president of the Republic of Iraq, on the occasion of the anniversary of the triumphant 17 July revolution. The message says:

I am pleased to convey to your excellency and the brothers in the Republic of Iraq on behalf of the RCC and the Sudanese Government and people our sincerest congratulations and best wishes. We pray that God Almighty bestow on you good health [word indistinct] to ensure progress and loftiness for the fraternal Iraqi people.

I am also happy to seize this historic occasion to hail the cooperation and fraternity linking our two countries and peoples. We assure your excellency that we shall spare no efforts to strengthen our relations to achieve the convergence and unity of Arab ranks and to achieve the interests of our fraternal peoples and countries. Your excellency, accept my highest consideration.

Minister Rejects 'U.S-Atlantic Threats' to Iraq

JN1707134391 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1240 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Khartoum, 17 Jul (INA)—'Abdallah Muhammad Ahmad, Sudanese minister of culture and information, has reiterated Sudan's categorical rejection of the U.S.-Atlantic threats against Iraq. During a meeting in Khartoum today with the Iraqi ambassador to Sudan, the Sudanese minister warned against using neighboring countries as springboards for the new aggression that the United States and its allies are planning against Iraq. An INA correspondent in Khartoum quoted the minister as saying that using neighboring states in any aggression against Iraq will create animosity and hostility among the peoples of the region and also jeopardize their security and stability.

1,500 Weapons Confiscated in Darfur State

EA1507195091 Khartoum SUNA in French 1632 GMT 15 Jul 91

[Text] Khartoum, 15 July—Small arms and heavy weapons numbering 1,500 have been collected from various areas in the state of Darfur, western Sudan. In a press statement, Mr. Ahmad 'Uthman al-Haq, deputy governor of the state of Darfur, said that this step has been taken in the framework of the plan aimed at maintaining peace and stability in Darfur and at putting an end to tribal conflicts in the area.

Kuwait

Interior Minister on Saddam, Security

LD1707203391 London KUNA in Arabic 1420 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Beirut, 17 Jul (KUNA)—Kuwaiti Interior Minister Ahmad al-Hamud al-Sabah said that matters will return to normal and will straighten out by the end of the current year. He emphasized that it is the Kuwaitis themselves who protect Kuwait. In an interview with the Lebanese AL-SAFIR and AL-SHARQ published here today, Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud stated that in a short time, not to exceed the end of this year, the situation will return to what it was prior to 2 August 1990. He considered Saddam Husayn's continuation as head of the Iraqi regime as a continuing conspiracy against Kuwait.

He stressed Kuwait's adherence to its Arabism, asserting that the Kuwaitis cannot live outside their Arab surroundings. He said: "We just cannot live without the Arabs. We are Arabs. What would we be without our Arabism? Who defended Kuwait? Was it only the Americans and the allies who defended Kuwait? No. The Arab world also defended Kuwait; and when we talk about Arabism we say that the fingernail does not come out of the flesh." [as received]

The Kuwaiti interior minister denied that there are armed militias in the country. He described reports pertaining to this issue as fabricated, asserting that they are "venomous news propagated by the Western media. I read in one of these papers that one of my cousins led an armed militia. This is a joke, it is regrettable and is hollow talk."

Minister al-Hamud warned that the conspiracy against Kuwait will continue as long as the president of the Iraqi regime remains in his post. He said: "As long as Saddam Husayn remains at the head of the Iraqi regime, the conspiracy will not stop. They will always try to keep us in a state of worry. God willing, we will face up to this with full confidence." Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud al-Sabah indicated that when the Iraqi forces fled, they left behind them a fifth column whose mission was to spread rumors to destabilize the internal front. He said that the fifth column, which is composed of some Iraqis among others, has a mission to disseminate rumors to destablize the Kuwaiti internal front. They are trying to undermine domestic national unity.

He stressed the soveriegnty of the law and indicated that not all Iraqis present in Kuwait are targets for trials. He said: "The Iraqis who cooperated and collaborated with the enemy are my target. There are, however, a large number of Iraqis who lived among us, shared our food, and helped their Kuwaiti brothers. They are still among us, and they live in complete safety." He recalled that "the Kuwaiti individual is known for his pacifist nature, and at the same time he can differentiate between those who cooperated with the enemy and those who were loyal to Kuwait."

Regarding information on the discovery of a number of booby-trapped cars, Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud said that "there are attempts to tamper with security." He added that a number of people who were trying to undermine security have been arrested and that others are still being pursued.

The Kuwaiti interior minister set the date for the return of things to the way they were before the Iraqi invasion to the end of this year, saying: "The destruction in the apparatus of the Interior Ministry and the exodus of several workers from the ministry's apparatus affected the progress of their work and the speed in completing measures and transactions. We have to (?reorganize) the ministry, the computer, and other things; and we have to be patient until the end of the year, and then all matters will be solved."

With regard to the possibility of granting entry visas to Kuwait now, he said: "By the end of the year we will have reestablished all the arrangements, and it will be possible then."

With regard to the meetings of the opposition, Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud al-Sabah said: "If there are meetings in a diwaniyah [venue for discussion meetings, usually held in premises of prominent personalities], we have no objections. The most important thing, however, is that they do not go beyond the framework of security and the authority of internal security. Let everyone talk about all issues from politics to security and trade and we—as authorities—we do not object to that." He pointed out that there is a law on gatherings and any gathering outside the diwaniyahs must receive permission. He pointed out that it is not in the nature of the Kuwaiti regime to forbid others to talk, but rather the contrary.

He addressed the Lebanese journalists saying: "You have attended and listened at a meeting which was held at Mr. Ahmad al-Sa'dun's diwaniyah. Did you see any security man or any patrol of security men?"

Minister al-Hamud rejected the idea of inviting groups of American experts to work against terrorism. He said: "Never, never. The Kuwaitis will protect Kuwait, and we are working 18 hours a day." He hailed the Kuwaiti security men for the difficult duties they are undertaking so that the country can recover its security and stability.

He said that the ministry opened its doors for volunteers in the security force body to implement the law. "We are doing this to protect everybody, and weapons in the hands of common people are different from weapons when they are in the hands of security forces and the law." The interior minister reiterated his call to Kuwaitis and residents to hand over any arms in their possession.

He said: "We have already called on everyone to hand over arms and ammunitions, and a considerable number

of Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis have already returned these weapons and ammunition." He pointed out that more arms and ammunition are still in the possession of civilians, and said: "We know there are more arms; all of them must be handed over, otherwise the law will be applied strictly."

He recalled that the Iraqi occupation forces left arms and ammunition behind when they were expelled from Kuwait on 26 February. He said: "When they fled on 26 February, they left these arms and ammunition, and what we have gathered so far is five times the anount the Kuwaiti Army owns."

Minister al-Hamud said: "These munitions, which are of Western manufacture, are no good for our arms. There are other quantities of munitions which we are in the process of collecting." He called on Kuwaiti citizens and residents of Kuwait to cooperate with the security forces to preserve security and stability in the country.

He said that the number of prisoners in Kuwait, "including collaborators with the enemy and non-collaborators, does not exceed 3,000 people, among whom there are people of non-Arab nationality." He considered that there is a low and biased campaign against Kuwait that exploits the Palestinian issue, and he pointed out that a large number of Palestinians were born in Kuwait: They were educated there, and they educated their children in its schools and universities. They also worked there and made a lot of money from their work.

He said: "Here, we come to the Palestinian role during the plight of Kuwait, and just as there were elements among the Palestinians who helped the Iraqis, so there were also Palestinian elements who helped the Kuwaitis; and we are not ready to treat both in the same way." He pointed out that there are Palestinians who are working in the Interior Ministry and other ministries and who are still employed.

He added that half the Arabs who work in his own house are Palestinians, and wondered: "Would I be able to allow a Palestinian to enter my bedroom to do his work there at a time when I am oppressing and killing Palestinians, as is alleged by low campaigns?" He said: "There are organizations nourishing this biased campaign against Kuwait, and truth will surely be known one day." Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud pledged to secure protection and honorable living for each resident of Kuwait and stressed the sovereignty of law on the Kuwaitis and the residents.

Army Command Calls for Surrender of Explosives

LD1707133691 London KUNA in Arabic 1129 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Kuwait, 17 Jul (KUNA)—The Command of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army has appealed to citizens and residents to surrender ammunition and explosives or inform the security posts in their areas about them.

In a statement distributed by the Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations in the Ministry of Defense here today, the General Staff Command said: Because the General Staff Command, represented by the Directorate of Engineering, is conducting an operation to survey Kuwait's towns and regions and clear them of ammunition and explosive materials, the citizens and residents are required to inform the security posts in their areas about this ammunition as there is coordination with these posts on the receipt of such materials.

The General Staff Command called on the citizens and residents to provide information about the existence of those materials by contacting either of the following telephone numbers: 4845735 or 4837169.

17 Jul Cabinet Meeting Reported

NC1707192091 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The cabinet met this morning chaired by His Excellency Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister.

The cabinet Secretary General 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-'Utaybi said that the heir apparent and prime minister began the meeting with a briefing on the outcome of the visit to Kuwait on Sunday by Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng, and the nature of the talks held between the Kuwaiti and Chinese sides during the visit. The talks dealt with topics mainly on the means adequate to ensure the implementation of the Security Council resolution concerning the liberation of Kuwait from the treacherous Iraqi occupation, al-'Utaybi added.

The cabinet secretary general went on to say that the talks also touched on the means to bolster the good relations between the two friendly countries. He said that the two sides discussed the ongoing efforts to resolve the Palestinian problem, the restoration of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, and the achievement of peace in the region.

The cabinet secretary general said that the cabinet members discussed the outcome of the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration countries, which ended in Kuwait yesterday. He said that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shaykh Salim al-Sabah submitted a report to the cabinet in which he expounded on the topics discussed during the meeting, the sincere fraternal atmosphere that prevailed, and the good results attained on the path of achieving the grand objectives and principles of the declaration within the framework of the Arab League. [passage indistinct]

Reportage on Foreign Minister's Visit to Turkey

WA1607192591

For reportage on the visit by Foreign Affairs Minister Sa'ud al-Faysal al Sa'ud to Turkey, including reports on his talks with President Turgut Ozal, Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, and Foreign Minister Safa Giray, please see the Turkey section of the 15 July West Europe DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Officers Threaten Coup If al-Rashid Executed

PM1707154591 London SAWT AL-KUWAYT AL-DUWALI in Arabic 17 Jul 91 p 1

[Unattributed report: "It Is Said"]

[Text] It is said that former Iraqi Chief of Staff Husayn al-Rashid is now facing a death sentence for "conspiracy," and that officers from Tikrit, including Mahir al-Rashid [not further identified], have threatened to stage a coup against the regime if al-Rashid is executed.

Foreign Minister on Call for Arab League Session

JN1707111491 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1000 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Baghdad, 17 July (INA)—Foreign Minister Ahmad Husayn has stated that Iraq's call for an emergency meeting of the Arab foreign ministers is designed to place all facts before the brothers regarding Iraq's peaceful nuclear program.

He added: We are eager for the Arab officials to acquaint themselves with the extent of the cooperation and facilities Iraq has offered to the UN inspection teams in implementing its obligations under Security Council Resolution No. 687.

In a statement to INA today, the minister said that by calling for the meeting, Iraq does not intend to open the wounds and create controversy but to provide facts about the American, Western, and Zionist threats to commit an aggression against Iraq under exposed political pretexts.

He also said: The Iraqi delegation to the emergency meeting will not present draft resolutions or working papers, or make any specific demand, but will allow the Arab brothers who will participate in the meeting to discuss the threats and take whatever measure they view appropriate in line with their pan-Arab responsibility and in accordance with the Arab League member states' obligations defined in the Arab League Charter and the Collective Arab Defense Pact.

Ahmad Husayn expressed his belief that the brothers' response to Iraq's call will be a new effort to patch up the rift, bury the differences, and prove everybody's adherence to Arab solidarity and joint pan-Arab action within the framework of the mother institution, the Arab League.

The minister added: The current blackmail and pressures the U.S. Administration and its allies are practicing against Iraq is an object of concern to the whole Arab nation now and in the future because no fraternal country will be able to escape their effects, as they will not only deal a blow to Iraq's capabilities in the field of nuclear technology research for peaceful and scientific purposes, with the aim of serving the national and pan-Arab development and progressive programs, but also will oppose every fraternal country trying to get rid of the legacy of backwardness, to use modern science, to raise the standard of living of its people, and to achieve prosperity and justice for all its citizens.

Concluding his statement, Ahmad Husayn recalled Iraq's request to the Arab League secretary general to form a committee representing the Arab League or the Republic of Arab Egypt to acquaint itself on the ground with the facts about Iraq's peaceful nuclear capabilities. Iraq, he added, will provide all the required facilities to the committee just as it did to facilitate the mission of the international inspection teams.

IAEA Officials' Recent Statements Refuted

JN1707211891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1950 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Baghdad, 17 July (INA)—A responsible source at the Iraqi Foreign Ministry has commented on statements attributed yesterday to Hans Blix, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] and Maurizio Zifferero, IAEA deputy director general.

In a statement to INA, the source explained that Zifferero said that international experts managed to inspect a uranium enrichment plant under construction that was not disclosed by Iraq. The IAEA official added that the plant is located in al-Sharqat.

What was called the al-Sharqat plant is in fact a complex of buildings under construction. The Iraqi side previously mentioned these buildings which [words indistinct] to the international inspection team and informed the team of them on behalf of the Iraqi bodies currently in charge of the sites. The team was briefed on how these buildings were constructed after the head of the international inspection team notified the Iraqi side of the intention to visit there.

For a long time, specifically since Iran and Israel bombed the 17 July nuclear complex in 1981, the Iraqi Atomic Energy Agency has been following a policy of building basic, similar, and symmetrical buildings with the aim of camouflaging the basic, genuine building, protecting it from bombardment, and preparing the other similar basic building as an alternative to be resorted to in case the genuine, basic building is destroyed.

Iraq is the only country whose nuclear installations have frequently come under air attack by more than one country. Israeli warplanes attacked our peaceful nuclear installations in the 17 July complex after the aircraft crossed the borders of more than one country, exploiting our preoccupation with defending our country against the aggressive war imposed on us by the Iranian regime. Iraq is the country whose al-Safra reactor four [as received] was destroyed by the strongest country in the world on the pretext that the reactor was being used to produce a nuclear weapon. Meanwhile, any person with a mediocre scientific knowledge knows that this reactor was not fit for more than student training. The United States destroyed the Iraqi reactors and a radiation catastrophe was about to take place, threatening the whole region.

Because of all that, the Iraqi Atomic Energy Agency followed the policy of establishing symmetrical and alternative buildings. If the most important factor in designing and building nuclear installations is their safety, and since some industrial countries build double walls around nuclear buildings with at least one meter between the two walls in order to protect them against the possibilities of an aircraft crash, then it is Iraq's right to follow the method of alternative buildings to safeguard its installations against air attacks.

The international team visiting Iraq was acquainted with a model of such symmetrical alternative buildings during its first visit in May 1991 and during its inspection mission in the al-Tuwaythah site. The team itself called that building a decoy [al-mushabih].

The al-Sharqat site was designed according to this approach. The Iraqi Atomic Energy Organization planned to construct an identical building to replace the al-Tarmiyah laboratories. The construction work started one year after the building work in al-Tarmiyah had begun. When the al-Tarmiyah buildings were completed and the equipment installation began, the alternate building idea was abandoned because of economic difficulties that Iraq faced at the time. The al-Sharqat site, whose construction was not completed yet, was offered to the Ministry of Industry and Minerals which undertook to complete the building and to use it for one of its projects. The al-Sharqat site was known to all those working in atomic energy as "the alternate site." For a long time, this has been its name.

We informed the head of the current inspection team of this when a group of the team visited the al-Sharqat site. We affirmed that the distribution and structure of the building are similar to those found in al-Tarmiyah. We explained the background of the matter; and because he was aware of the buildings found in al-Tuwaythah, he accepted the explanation.

It seems to us that the IAEA deputy director is not aware of this background. He might be excused, as neither his country nor any other European country has been exposed to the aggression to which Iraq and its nuclear installations were exposed. He does not have such ideas embedded in his mind. That is why we found it imperative that we explain the reasons that prompted us to use the method of symmetrical and identical buildings.

The source said: With regard to what IAEA Director General Hans Blix said concerning the quantity of enriched uranium produced, it seems that Mr. Blix has based his statement on assumptions and claims launched by known quarters and some Western and American media organs. We are surprised at this, because Mr. Blix is known for his objectivity and scientific accuracy. We would like to remind him that when the issue of the Israeli nuclear capabilities were raised, Mr. Blix himself responded that the IAEA does not deal with suppositions and assumptions even if they are made by competent committees in the United Nations, but deals with facts. Why did he resort to suppositions and assumptions when the issue concerns Iraq. Did he himself not say in his report to the Security Council on 11 July 1991 that in the best cases and the best technical and scientific circumstances, Iraq's estimated production of the enriched uranium cannot exceed three kilograms? And this, as he said, is a theoretical assumption which is very difficult to be implemented practically.

It would have been better for the director general if he were patient in issuing such estimations, assumptions, and exciting judgments, particularly since the international inspection team which is currently in Iraq visited al-Tarmiyah yesterday, watched a videotape of what the complex contained, held an expanded scientific dialogue, and was acquainted with operational records and documents that were sufficient to give a scientific and objective opinion away from predictions and assumptions and apart from pressures.

IAEA Team Leader on Iraqi Cooperation

JN1807092991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0855 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] Baghdad, 18 July (INA)—The International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] experts assigned by the United Nations to investigate Iraq's nuclear capabilities have said that Iraq fully cooperated to facilitate their mission.

In a report monitored in Baghdad today, the BBC English service quoted the head of the team, Dimitri Perricos, as saying that Iraq gave the team sufficient information about its nuclear equipment. He said Iraq is free of what he termed nuclear secrets.

Negotiations With Kurds Reportedly Faltering

JN1707185091 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni dispatch from Tehran]

[Text] Our radio has learned from sources in the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] that the Kurdistan Front negotiations with the Iraqi Government taking place in Baghdad are faltering. The hopes the Baghdad government had of announcing the success of negotiations and reaching a comprehensive agreement with the Kurdish leadership on 17 July have completely evaporated and negotiations will be difficult and long from now on.

Mr. Bakr Fattah, PUK representative in the Iranian capital, informed our radio that the PUK head left Baghdad three days ago to return to his headquarters in Shaqlawah in Iraq's Kurdistan, leaving behind his representative Dr. Fu'ad Ma'sum to continue negotiations as part of the front's delegation lead by Mas'ud Barzani, leader of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan.

The spokesman for Jalal Talabani says the reason for the faltering of negotiations so far is the issue of democracy in Iraq which suffered from a new setback when the Iraqi leadership, during the most recent National Assembly

meeting, once again tried to impose the principle of loyalty of all Iraqi parties to the principles of the 17 July revolution and the Ba'th Party's leadership, something rejected by the front and all the other Iraqi political trends.

In another development, our radio also learned from sources close to the grouping of Iraqi Islamic forces, an independent grouping whose headquarters is in the Syrian capital, that a delegation of Iraqi figures within the framework of this grouping, met this morning with the director of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the French Foreign Ministry, Mr. Patrick Leclercq, and handed over an important message to French President Francois Mitterrand in which it expressed its concern on human rights in Iraq. The Iraqi opposition source that informed our radio of this piece of news in a telephone interview also reminded us that this delegation had already met with David Mack, a U.S. State Department official for the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, before arriving in the French capital from the United States.

It is worth noting that an Iraqi personality well-known in the Arab world for his fine literary writings headed this delegation. This person is Mr. Mustafa Jamal-al-Din.

Sudan's al-Turabi Arrives on Visit

JN1707195591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1850 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Baghdad, 17 July (INA)—Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front in Sudan, arrived in Baghdad today on a visit of several days.

In a statement to INA, Dr. al-Turabi said that the brute aggression against Iraq was an aggression against the sublime and noble slogans Iraq upheld and firmly defended, demonstrating deep faith in the common fate of the Arab nation.

Al-Turabi added that the American-Zionist aggression against Iraq constituted a dangerous precedent for the world. It was a manifestation of a drift toward imperialist domination and hegemony, he said.

Al-Turabi was welcomed upon arrival by 'Abdallah Fadil, minister of awqaf and religious affairs.

U.S. Seen Halting Projects 'To Apply Pressure'

TA1707184691 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Reports that arrived in Jerusalem today, including one by the Israeli ambassador to the United States, indicate that the implementation of several issues on which Jerusalem and Washington had already agreed may be put off in order to apply pressure on Israel. That was learned by our political correspondent Gadi Sukenik. These issues include, among others, joint Israeli-U.S. action to revoke the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism. Our correspondent says that Jerusalem is dismayed by the fact that the Americans have not yet passed on to Israel the full text of President al-Asad's response to the U.S. peace initiative, even though Baker is to meet with the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the defense minister as early as Sunday night.

Israel is also closely monitoring the Egyptian and Syrian presidents' attempts to reach a coordinated position.

Our correspondent adds that when Baker comes to Jerusalem, he will first confer with a Palestinian delegation, and then with the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the defense minister.

The prime minister's bureau does not want to kindle too many hopes in anticipation of the meeting with Baker. Thus, the prime minister asked the ministers today to avoid issuing public statements about Syria's reply.

Envoys Hold 'Tense Meeting' With U.S. Official

TA1807051591 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] A report on a tense meeting Ambassadors Zalman Shoval and Yoram Aridor held with John Bolton, assistant secretary for international organization affairs, has reached Jerusalem. Bolton said that from a practical point of view, it will be difficult to abrogate the resolution equating Zionism with racism if it is not accompanied by progress in the political process. Ambassador Shoval did not hide his anger. He said: Suddenly we hear that nullifying the Arab boycott now depends on the peace process, as does the cancellation of the UN resolution on Zionism. Jerusalem claims that these conditions were not made previously. Perhaps it is simply a hint at the atmosphere to be expected in the talks with Baker.

Right-Wing Parties Warn Shamir on Peace Process

TA1807073991 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 18 Jul 91 p 12

[Report by Michal Yudelman]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Tehiya leaders met Prime Minister Shamir yesterday to "remind" him that any concessions to Secretary of State Baker would result in their bolting the coalition.

Tzomet too made clear that a similar warning made two months ago by nine MKs [Knesset members] from the Tehiya, Moledet, the National Religious Party and Tzomet still stands.

Tzomet Minister Refa'el Eytan is in the Soviet Union and Tehiya Minister Yuval Ne'eman is also abroad.

But the Tehiya and Tzomet leaders remaining in Israel said they are not threatening the coalition at this stage since Shamir is saying nothing.

But Shamir made no promises to Tehiya and the meeting lasted only 15 minutes, sources close to the prime minister told THE JERUSALEM POST.

The Tehiya MKs—deputy minister Ge'ula Kohen, Gershon Shafat and Elyaqim Ha'etzni—reminded Shamir of their "red lines."

They said they would leave the coalition if peace talks included a UN representative—passive or not—or one in any guise from the PLO. They also reject any bid to turn talks into an ongoing conference.

Kohen said after the meeting that Baker must be told "neither he nor the United States are fulfilling their duty as mediators and are turning from mediators into judges.

"Baker is not here to make value judgements on what is a positive development and what is not," she said. "The U.S. must be a communication channel between the sides, to bring them to direct negotiations. Instead the U.S. is becoming an obstacle to direct negotiations."

Kohen said if Shamir showed any signs of "folding", then Tehiya and other rightwing parties would have no place in his government.

"The government will fall apart and there will be early elections. After that we hope a more rightwing government, better equipped to withstand Arab pressures, will be formed."

[Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 18 July carries a related report by David Makovsky on page 1, noting that "officials confirmed that Shamir told the Tehiya party yesterday that he has not yielded in his opposition to the idea of a UN observer attending the Middle East peace conference."]

Tzomet yesterday issued a statement titled "Baker, Shame!" which called on Baker "not to beat around the Bush.

"Bush and Baker claim that the Syrians' answer is positive and gives new momentum to the famous peace plan," it said.

"If the answer is so positive, why is Bush refusing to present it in full before Israel's government, so that it can join in the celebrations?"

The statement told Bush and Baker not to trust Syrian President al-Asad and it warned: "Should Baker continue to lead U.S. policy in the direction of his predecessors, it will reach the same destination—the garbage dump of history."

Tzomet's Yo'ash Tzidon told THE JERUSALEM POST there was no need to threaten Shamir at this point.

"I am sure he is well aware of the joint warning I initiated a few weeks ago by nine rightwing MKs, all of whom will quit the coalition if he gives in. I just wanted the premier to know where we stand."

Shamir Seen Intent on Foiling Peace Process

TA1707171391 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 17 Jul 91 p B1

[Commentary by 'Aqiva Eldar: "The Ball Returns to Washington's Court"]

[Text] Members of the audience watching the never-ending game called "The Peace Process" share the misapprehension that Hafiz al-Asad's letter to the Americans sent the ball back to Yitzhaq Shamir's court. That court is teeming with too many players, all intent on blowing up the game. They realize—and rightly so—that if the game is concluded in accordance with conventional international rules, considerable chunks of the court will be given away to their adversary.

Those who believe that the game has been fixed will do anything to avoid reaching the finish line, and for that reason the judges should stop wasting their time. Although al-Asad's reply has made the players' dodging more tricky, their quivers still hold enough arrows to shoot holes in half a dozen balls.

The Syrian concession on the UN role and the conference's ongoing nature has made it difficult for Israel to block the process on procedural grounds. It is therefore quite possible that Shamir will convince his colleagues to agree to a few minor procedural concessions he has kept in his drawer for a rainy day. There is no need, however, to feel sorry for the Israeli Government: The last word on questions of substance has not been uttered yet, and coalition partners may yet impose constraints with regard to the Palestinian representation. The Syrians have not introduced all their demands, either. In return for their procedural concessions, the United States is being asked to guarantee a clear position on every angle of Resolution 242's territorial aspects, particularly regarding the Golan Heights. In a recent meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Shamir voiced reservations about the chief mediator's taking sides, a priori, with the position of one of the negotiating parties. That's one interesting constraint, if you wish.

The question of East Jerusalem's representation has already succeeded in foiling one Baker peace initiative. Some Palestinians have urged their brethren to compromise on that issue, too, and to settle for a U.S. guarantee that the absence of East Jerusalem representatives from the Palestinian delegation will not be indicative of any change in the U.S. position that the problem of Jerusalem is to be resolved in a debate on a permanent arrangement for the territories. They believe that this is Shamir's last trump, and that when it is removed, his intransigence will be there for all to see.

And then what? Even if the assessment that he is as interested in the peace process as he is in Shim'on Peres' return to the cabinet is disproved, the odds of his giving in to an Ari'el Sharon-Beni Begin coalition at the Likud convention are higher that the odds of his negotiating with Hafiz al-Asad and King Husayn at a peace conference. When he runs out of pretexts, Shamir will always be able to hide behind the aprons of Rehav'am Ze'evi, Yuval Ne'eman, and Refa'el Eytan, who are not suspected of supporting any idea incompatible with the concept of Greater Israel, or of favoring the Camp David accords. He will also be able to claim that he would very much like to talk with the Arabs, but, to his chagrin, he is unable to do so because of coalition constraints.

Thus, any additional time spent playing ball with Shamir would be a waste. He will find a way to toss the ball quickly over to the Arabs or, alternatively, clutch it until the cows come home. The past decade's "peace processes" have taught the prime minister and his subjects that it is possible to thumb your nose at the whole world and even bite the hand of the Americans, who guarantee their existence and well-being, and still emerge unscathed. Al-Asad's kick of the ball to Bush's feet was superbly aimed, and it would be a shame to waste it on further useless kicks toward the Israeli Government, as they are bound to be blocked at Shamir's office gates.

The Middle East game has for too long been played according to the rules of internal politics prevailing on the green lawns stretching between the White House, Capitol Hill, and AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] offices. If Bush, as his associates attest, really fears a nuclear cataclysm in the Middle East and is determined to defuse that mine, he is entitled to employ all the means at his disposal. If he allows Shamir and "Israel's friends" in Congress to take it all away from him, then al-Asad's affirmative reply might, at best, follow in the footsteps of the earlier positive answers of Yasir 'Arafat, Faysal al-Husayni, and King Husayn.

If the administration breaks the first serious opportunity to launch negotiations for a comprehensive peace between Israel, the Arab countries, and the Palestinians into separate, tiny issues, and if Congress continues to pump monetary blood into the government's settlement policy, Shamir's popularity at the ballot box will soon approximate that of Bush the day after the Gulf war.

So what if the Americans charge Israel with rejectionism? As long as they continue to weep and pay, let the defeatist pessimists continue to write to their heart's

content; Shamir, as always, will have the last laugh. That missed opportunity will serve as a double message for the Arabs and the Israelis alike: Where Jews are concerned, the United States is a paper tiger. They can therefore only resolve the conflict by themselves, God forbid.

3 Soldiers Killed, 4 Wounded in Lebanon Clash

TA1707172091 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Three IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers were killed and four wounded in a clash with terrorists northeast of the security zone in southern Lebanon last night. The wounded—two with moderately serious injuries, and two slightly injured—were evacuated to Rambam Hospital in Haifa. This was reported by our correspondents Karmela Menashe and Yo'av Aviv.

The IDF spokesman says that an IDF force, which was engaged in an initiated action north of the security zone, encountered terrorists. Three IDF troops were killed and four wounded in the ensuing exchange of fire. The clash proceeded under difficult conditions, with the IDF troops attempting simultaneously to repulse the terrorists and to care for their wounded comrades.

The defense minister, the chief of staff, and the Northern Command commander were briefed by local commanders and troops. They commended the soldiers on their efficient and determined performance. The chief of staff later told the troops that the clash was part of the initiated action.

[Reporting on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 1700 GMT on 17 July, Alan Ben-'Ami quotes Major General Mordekhay, the Northern Command commander, as saying that "Israeli forces will continue to take initiated actions beyond the security zone to stop, thwart, prevent terrorist activity."]

'Harsher' Reactions Promised

TA1707192791 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Excerpts] Two officers and a first sergeant were killed in a clash with Hizballah terrorists north of the southern Lebanese security strip last night. One terrorist was killed and five others were wounded. Our army affairs correspondent Moshe Shlonsky reports:

[Begin recording] [Shlonsky] [passage omitted] Major General Yitzhaq Mordekhay, commander of the Northern Command, what do you know about Syrian activity in connection with Hizballah? I understand, by what we were told, that the Lebanese Army demanded that Hizballah not be disarmed and that that organization is currently the main enemy confronting the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the SLA [South Lebanese Army] along the Lebanese border.

[Mordekhay] Look, it is no secret that the Syrians and the Lebanese have agreements. The Lebanese Army is trying to take control. Right now, in areas adjacent to the security strip and the Jazzin enclave, it has been unsuccessful in the face of the terrorists—who are mainly Palestinians and Hizballah members. Apparently some of the moves and actions are coordinated.

[Shlonsky] But you do not know about direct involvement in activating Hizballah?

[Mordekhay] We have no information about the direct involvement of external elements in the activity of Hizballah and other terrorists inside Lebanon against us. [passage omitted]

[Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq] I would like to convey the IDF's condolences to the families that lost their sons. We lost today three of our finest commanders and fighters from one of our best units. This was a heavy price. Nonetheless, we are in the midst of very extensive initiated operations against Hizballah, whose aim is that we encounter them beyond the security strip, rather than in Malkiyya or Adamit. We will have to continue this activity. [passage omitted]

[Shlonsky] Since Hizballah terrorists moved southward and entered southern Lebanese villages, that organization has stepped up its anti-IDF and anti-SLA activity. In this state of affairs, sources at the defense establishment say, not only is there no room for talk about an IDF withdrawal from Lebanon, but future reactions will be far harsher with every attack. The Lebanese Army's deployment to date has not stopped Hizballah's terrorists from operating almost unimpeded in the security strip. [end recording]

Commentator Favors Status Quo in South Lebanon

TA1207185991 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 12 Jul 91 p B1

[Commentary by Avraham Schweitzer: "Negligible Changes in the North"]

[Text] It is hard to understand why the Israeli media—and subsequently, the ruling circles—became so jittery in the wake of events on the other side of Israel's northern border. The change—if any—brought about by the Lebanese Army's southward movement and deployment in a terrain which had been shared exclusively by several varieties of terrorists (the PLO, Hizballah, Amal) has done nothing to affect the reasoning behind the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] deployment along its northern border. The change has occurred mainly in a sphere that would be best defined as propaganda: The various components of the Arab side have gained additional arguments with which they can support the demand to abolish the Israeli security arrangements. Their real reason, however, is convenience; their arguments are devoid of any military or political import warranting redeployment.

This conclusion becomes obvious if the situation is viewed in three crosscuts: current security, regional strategic balance, and political negotiations, or, in plain

words, the American aspect of the current constellation. The impact of the changes in the north—the Lebanese Army deployment down to the Israeli security zone, the Palestinian handover of heavy weapons, and their concentration in al-Biqa'—is of minor significance from Israel's point of view. Moreover, Israel's arguments in favor of maintaining a status quo are ponderable, unlike those presented with respect to the territories in its east and south.

During the past decade or so, IDF strategists must have regarded the heavy weapons in the hands of the PLO, Hizballah, and other organizations as an insignificant detail. From the Israeli angle, the military importance of southern Lebanon narrows down to the daily security risks borne by the Israeli population along the border and, to a certain extent, the terrorist threat to the entire country's civilian home front. This threat does not stem from the various terrorist organizations' heavy weapons, but rather from squads of warriors equipped with Kalashnikovs, hand grenades, and manually operated missile launchers. These weapons were not handed over to the southbound Lebanese Army, and they are as portable as they are easy to conceal. In addition, even if the PLO moves its staff's quarters to al-Biqa', the distance will contribute nothing to the elimination of the threat of infiltration into and terrorist attacks against Israel. Furthermore, the Lebanese Army will be unable to meet every eventuality (see the penetrations into IDF outposts). And what restrictions will the Lebanese Army impose on Hizballah, which consists of ostensibly innocuous Lebanese civilians?

The security zone along the Lebanese border was never considered a barrier against the strategic Syrian threat from the north. It was, however, used as a warning to Syria, indicating that Israel would not tolerate a destabilization of the balance of forces that was established upon the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon in 1983. The Israeli presence in the security zone (including Jazzin and the vicinity which has joined it in practice) encounters no local resistance. A cutback in the IDF presence or an evacuation of some of the posts captured in 1983 which have since become components of the Israeli-Syrian status quo might deliver undesirable messages to Syria.

What is left is the fear of UN pressure on us, with U.S. backing, under the pretext that Israel must withdraw from the security zone and allow Lebanon to complete imposing its renewed sovereignty over the whole of its territory. This fear, however, is no reason to rush and weaken Israel's foothold there. If worse comes to worst, the security zone could serve as a commodity that could be traded in bilateral or trilateral negotiations for an arrangement. Luckily, the national camp has not yet granted the security zone the title of "an inseparable part of Eretz Yisra'el." It is reasonable to assume that it will not do so, because the political price of holding the IDF positions, considering the profit it brings, is still very low.

Perhaps it would be in place here to make clear that giving up on positions, military or civilian, acquired by blood, labor, and money, cannot serve as a guideline in policymaking. A concession or withdrawal is called for when holding on to property costs more than it is worth. For example, the price of holding on to the territories of Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza was and will be far greater than the current or future profit they have or will bring. This is not the case of the security zone. The price for holding on to it is reasonable and its benefit is obvious. What, therefore, created the urge to raise doubts about it being right at present and the chances of holding on to it in the future?

Insufficient Evidence Ruled in Temple Mount Case

TA180707459l Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] An indictment cannot be presented against any of those involved in the Temple Mount events eight months ago for lack of evidence to substantiate any charges, investigating judge 'Ezra Qama has ruled. Our correspondent Moshe Nussbaum reports that in his report, the judge says that in certain instances the police exceeded reasonable behavior to the point of negligence, but does not say there is cause to indict any of them.

The judge says that all those responsible for the Temple Mount incident, both within the Israel Police and the Muslim organizations, did not manage to prevent the situation from deteriorating. The events began over a minor issue—the intention of a small group, to which the Muslims attribute too much importance, to enter the Mount—when in actual fact the group did not intend to go through with its plan, and it was also clear that it would not be given permission to do so on that day. Judge Qama says he regrets that such a minor issue caused such a serious deterioration. I regret that experienced officers did not manage to prevent the outbreak of events in time. Incorrect deployment caused the hostilities.

In the long and detailed document, the judge criticizes police behavior in some of the stages. He says that although at times there was shooting when there was no danger to life, there is insufficient evidence linking the policemen who fired with the actual casualties; therefore, he does not recommend presenting an indictment. Eighteen people were killed in the Temple Mount incident.

Sharon Promises Israeli Arabs Housing Rights

TA160711219l Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 16 Jul 91 p 3

[Report by David Rudge]

[Text] Housing Minister Ari'el Sharon yesterday pledged that Israeli Arab home-hunters would have the same rights as their Jewish counterparts.

The minister also promised that the government had no intention of expropriating Arab-owned land for the purpose of establishing Jewish settlements.

Sharon made the commitments during a meeting at the Housing Ministry's offices in Jerusalem yesterday with a delegation of 13 Arab council heads.

The council leaders complained about insufficient housing construction and infrastructure development in their towns and villages, despite population expansion.

Sharon instructed regional directors present at the meeting to deal with the individual problems raised by the council leaders.

He stressed that Arabs would benefit from the improved mortgages approved by the government on Sunday in the same way as Jewish citizens.

Regarding building homes for young couples, Sharon said there was no need to wait until the next financial year. Local authorities had only to submit details of housing requirements and work could start almost immediately, he said.

He also promised that the ministry would help make mirror improvements on streets within towns and villages, provided the costs would not be too high.

Asked about fears that the government intended to expropriate Arab-owned land for the purpose of establishing new Jewish settlements, Sharon stressed the government had no such plans.

There had been expropriation in the past but this was stopped when former prime minister Menahem Begin set up his first government and the policy has not been reinstated.

The Arab council heads expressed satisfaction over the talks with Sharon, saying he had listened to their problems with understanding and indicated his willingness to help.

Druze Declare Golan 'Inseparable Part of Israel'

TA1607130891 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 16 Jul 91 p 5

[Report by Shraga Eshel]

[Text] Yesterday, "for the first time in history"—as the saying goes—heads of Druze local councils from the Golan Heights said that "the Golan is an inseparable part of Israel."

The statement came at an "emergency meeting" of representatives of the Golan Heights settlements and heads of Golan Druze local councils and settlements convened at Qatzrin.

The surprise was provided by the heads of the Druze local councils. Turki al-'Ajami, head of the Majdal Shams Local Council, said: "We will struggle with all our might to keep the Golan Heights an inseparable part of Israel." Sami Bar-Lev, the head of the Qatzrin Local Council, called on the prime minister "not to repeat the mistake of Yamit." He protested the fact that the Housing and Construction Ministry has suddenly stopped budgeting construction work in the city.

Alignment Submits No-Confidence Motion

TA1707194091 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The Alignment Knesset faction has submitted a no-confidence motion over the government's failed economic policy, its ineffective immigrant absorption policy, and its disappointing handling of the political process. The motion will be debated at the Knesset next Monday, 22 July, two days before the Knesset adjourns for the summer recess.

King Congratulates Saddam Husayn on National Day

JN1707124391 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn sent a cable today to His Excellency President Saddam Husayn, congratulating him on behalf of the people and Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the National Day of the Iraqi Republic. Following is the text of his majesty's cable:

Your Excellency brother Saddam Husayn, president of the Iraqi Republic, may God protect you; Baghdad: I am pleased to seize the advent of the 23d anniversary of the national day of the fraternal Iraqi Republic to extend to your excellency and the unyielding fraternal Iraqi people, in my name and on behalf of the people and Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, my heartfelt congratulations and sincerest brotherly feelings, accompanied by prayers to God Almighty that your excellency may observe this anniversary again while enjoying good health and wellbeing, and while the Iraqi people are experiencing democracy and pluralism—protected by an army and institutions that are a shield for all of them—and while they are enjoying prosperity, dignity, and blessings. I also hope that God will guide you and grant you success in leading your people so that they can overcome their ordeal, continue their march, and achieve the dignity, progress, stability, affluence, and cohesion that they are seeking.

[Signed] Your brother, Husayn.

Deputies Express Views on Policy Statement

JN1707204391

[Editorial Report] Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic during the 1100 and 1500 GMT newscasts on 17 July, carry recordings of highlights from the parliamentary debate, which resumed this morning, on Prime Minister Tahir al-Masri's government policy statement. The first to address the house in today's session was Deputy 'Abd-al-Majid al-Shuraydah. He reviewed democracy, social and political issues, services, and the responsibility of deputies under the present circumstances. Commenting on the Gulf war, he says: "Jordan realized that siding with Iraq was perilous, not only for itself, but also for its resources and existence." He added that Jordan "has remained faithful to its principles, history, and conscience." He reviewed what was happening in Iraq, and asked the deputies "Do you think that Jordan will remain safe from the claws of revenge?" He added that there are plots being hatched against Jordan and that the "covetous and spiteful" are waiting for the right moment to undermine Jordan's security and stability, starting with its national unity. He said that the conspiracies against Jordan this time are more dangerous than ever before. This, he added, mandates that we live up to our responsibility, because "the situation Jordan is facing today is far more dangerous than the establishment of a government, regardless of its president and makeup." Given Jordan's sacrifices and positions despite its limited resources, Deputy al-Shuraydah argued, "How and from what door can Jordan enter into negotiations with Israel, as some say?" He went on to say: "Is the PLO not the sole and legitimate representative, and the party that accepts or rejects, since it is the party concerned with any just settlement?" This topic is settled, he said. This, however, "does not mean that the House of Representatives cannot watch the government's moves at all times, withhold confidence, and bring the government and ministers to task?"

Dr. Sa'd Haddadin spoke next. He underscored the important stage Jordan is experiencing, and said that "Prime Minister al-Masri's government is an extension of other governments." He demanded that the government "adopt a clear approach in drawing up policies and programs through which it will implement its policy statement." He discussed unemployment and other problems.

Deputy Nawwaf al-Khawalidah commented on some points in the policy statement, and stressed the problems of his governorate. He urged actions instead of "slogans" and asked the government to set forth "practical measures" to implement its promises. He said he will vote for the government because of his "absolute confidence in the Hashemite leadership" and other reasons. Deputy Mahmud Huwaymil emphasized problems in the southern region of Jordan, particularly agriculture, unemployment, and poverty. He suggested establishing a fund to address these problems.

Dr. Ahmad 'Uwayd al-'Abbadi discussed the policy statement "criticizing most of its contents." Dr. al-'Abbadi reviewed Jordan's political approach over the past decades, and praised its stands and ties with Palestine. He also praised King Husayn's leadership. After reviewing the government's statement, Deputy al-'Abbadi said he would withhold confidence in the government "because he is not content with it."

On behalf of some members of the Independent Islamic Bloc, Deputy Mutayr al-Bustanji spoke about various aspects of the policy statement, stressing the importance of the economy "which is the key to development and security in any society." He said "we support drawing up a national economic plan." Deputy al-Bustanji said that the policy statement's approach to unemployment and poverty is "good." Deputy al-Bustanji added: "We make it a condition for our confidence that the government implement Islamic shari'a in word and deed." Another condition is that there be "a change of some ministers." Deputy Dr. 'Ali al-Faqir, an independent Islamist, delivered a lengthy speech and criticized the government policy statement for ignoring "God's laws" and Islam in general, and rhetorically wondered whether the reason lies in Islam itself.

Deputy Hisham al-Sharari from the Governorate of Ma'an then took the floor and made a number of requests for his governorate. He doubted whether Tahir

al-Masri's government will be any "better than its predecessors, truer to its word, and more honest about what it says." He wondered whether it would keep its promises. He praised the veteran, wise leadership of this country, which he believed is its "guarantee" since it has overcome all past difficulties. He also lauded the Arab and Islamic identity of the Jordanian people.

Deputy Husni al-Shayyab contemplated the acceptable standards for any government. He called for clear programs to confront the government policy statement and for dialogue among the various political currents. He asked Mr. al-Masri to resume dialogue "to realize a comprehensive national coalition government...which is a political expression of our national unity." He claimed that our country and region are "now exposed militarily and economically, and penetrated in the field of education and security. We have nothing to fortify ourselves with in the face of this danger other than our national unity." He went on to praise Prime Minister al-Masri's "decency" and the fact that he was a former deputy, as well as most of the ministers who are "well-educated and decent" people. The policy statement, however, "is no different than previous ones in many aspects, since it lacks accuracy and specificity especially regarding unemployment, price hikes, and the economic situation in general." He concluded that only a national coalition government could solve these problems.

Deputy Mansur Murad explained the reasons for the Democratic Alliance's participation in Tahir al-Masri's government. This government is not a conventional one, he claimed, since it contains ministers of various political and other walks of life. The prime minister for example was formerly a deputy. He reviewed the various colors of the ministers and claimed this variety is a positive thing, so long as the prime minister succeeded in heading such a varied government. He expressed his conviction that the people will eventually support the government if it achieves things in their interest.

Deputy Ziyad al-Shuwaykh made some proposals and asked the government to adopt them, such as "supporting and protecting our local products and removing all factors that make individuals in Jordanian society unproductive." He gave the example of agricultural production in this country. He called on the government to curb importation of luxury goods.

Deputy Ahmad 'Innab reviewed the history of democratic progress internationally and locally, current events in the region, and the policy statement which "is a twin of previous statements, with the date being the only difference." "This government will win the vote of confidence," he said, "not because it deserves it, or because it is strong and sound," but because it came to be through an "old-fashioned caesarean operation" after which it was placed in an incubator to breathe life into it.

Deputy Dr. Qasim 'Ubaydat asked deputies to avoid personal slanders and made some comments in which he said he was not interested in discussing the policy statement. He remarked on unemployment among the youth and accused the former government of not tackling structural unemployment by absorbing new graduates into fields where they were needed. On the Palestine question, he accused the "U.S. Administration of not being serious about implementing the resolutions of what is termed international legitimacy on the occupied Arab territories. Successive U.S. Administrations have taught us one credible thing—that of loyalty and absolute support for the Zionist entity only." There is no need for international or regional conferences, since so many mechanisms and resolutions were produced, approved, and implemented by the Security Council on fraternal Iraq.

Deputy Yusuf al-Mubayyidin discussed the policy statement from both the internal and external aspects. He condemned it for teeming with promises of how to deal with the economic problems, when the deputies knew very well the capabilities of the government's general budget. He hoped the government would choose the more important problems to deal with, which would give it more credibility among the people. He advised the government "to review its promises and reconcile them with the general budget." Deputy Bassam Haddadin praised democracy which enabled us to overcome the most difficult turning points for our nation. He called for abandoning extremism and preconceived stands and ideas to strengthen our national unity and support the Palestinian people.

Deputy 'Atif al-Butush, the last deputy to speak for today, praised Jordan for the progress it made in recent years. "Had every government dealt with one problem at a time, we would have solved all the problems we hear over and over again in every policy statement we have had since the early 50's" he said. "We need to be realistic" he added, "to remove our country from the crises and conspiracies woven equally against its leadership and people."

Dr. 'Abd-al-Latif 'Arabiyat, speaker of the House of Representatives, then adjourned the session until 1000 [0700 GMT] on Thursday 18 July to further debate Prime Minister Tahir al-Masri's policy statement.

Lebanese Forces, Hizballah Exchange Detainees

NC1807110991 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 0900 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] Hizballah and the Lebanese Forces exchanged prisoners at the Defense Ministry in al-Yarzah at 1030 today. Eight detainees held by the Lebanese Forces were exchanged for five detainees held by Hizballah. Defense Minister Michel al-Murr said that the Lebanese Forces and Hizballah have affirmed that these were the last of the detainees they had been holding. He said that some had been in detention since 1987 while others have been held only for the past two years before the Army's deployment. Al-Murr said that the Defense Ministry has no information regarding the remaining people kidnapped during the war years.

Palestinian Group To Aid in Prisoner Exchange

NC1807120591 Paris AFP in English 1135 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] Beirut, July 18 (AFP)—A Muslim fundamentalist Palestinian group close to the Shiite Hizballah militia said Thursday that it was ready to help with an exchange of Israeli soldiers held by Hizballah for Lebanese and Palestinian detainees in Israel. "In coordination with the Islamic Resistance (Hizballah's paramilitary arm), we're ready to help with an immediate visit by the International Committee of the Red Cross to the Israeli prisoners," the Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine said in a statement released here to a Western news agency.

It said the release could only take place if Israel first freed "four of our comrades and formally commits itself to freeing all the other detainees." The statement identified the four as 'Itaf 'Alayyan, held since 1987, Nidal 'Abd-al-Razzaq Zallum, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin and 'Abd-al- Hadi Ghunaym, all three arrested in 1989.

A spokesman for Defense Minister Moshe Arens said Tuesday that Israel was prepared to begin exchanging prisoners on condition the Red Cross is allowed to visit the Israeli soldiers in Lebanon, two of whom are being held by Hizballah. Seven Israelis have gone missing in Lebanon since 1982. But Israel also accused Hizballah of creating obstacles for the exchange of prisoners and Western hostages in Lebanon by refusing to provide evidence that the Israeli soldiers were still alive.

Palestinians Resume Weapons Transfer to Army

NC1807064091 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] The contacts held over the past few days have solved the problem of the heavy- and medium-caliber weapons in the Tyre district camps and the Palestinian groups have resumed the transfer of these weapons to the Army command in the region. Four trucks left the Tyre Army barracks at 1630 yesterday for the al-Rashidiyah, al-Bass, and Burj al-Shamali camps. The trucks began loading the weapons after Army officers met with Palestinian commanders in each camp. The weapons from the al-Rashidiyah camp were loaded into two trucks, and those from the al-Bass and Burj al-Shamali camps were loaded into one truck each. The amount of weapons surrendered was considered very small.

AFP has reported that the Army received 35 small-caliber mortars, 47 machine guns, and about 60 ammunition boxes from the al- Rashidiyah camp last night. The agency cited a Palestinian official supervising the operation as saying that all the weapons will be delivered today—that is, yesterday—and that an agreement was concluded with the ministerial committee that has been holding contacts with the Palestinians to lift the siege around the camps as soon as the weapons are surrendered.

Asked whether new measures will be taken if the weapons are not surrendered, Defense Minister Michel al-Murr has said: We will do nothing beyond besieging the camps. We will not enter the camps, but the siege will continue until the weapons have been surrendered.

Asked whether someone might be asked to hold contacts with the Palestinians within Lebanon or overseas, he said: We do not need to hold contacts either outside or inside Lebanon. The weapons inside the camps must be surrendered, and when this happens, the siege will be lifted and the necessary contacts will begin to ensure the people's social and economic needs.

Hizballah Refuses Weapons Handover

NC1807065991 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0445 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] Hizballah Secretary General 'Abbas al-Musawi has said that his party will not hand its weapons over to the Lebanese Government as long as the Israelis remain in the country. In an interview with AL-HAYAH paper, he said: There is a justification for keeping all resistance rifles as long as the Israelis are in Lebanon. The issue of our weapons represents a red line that cannot be crossed, and we will not hand them over. He said that the Lebanese state's policy seeks to remove justifications, but he stressed that there will be no confrontation with the regular Army.

Israelis Reportedly Shell Iqlim al-Tuffah

NC1707122091 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] At approximately 1115 today, the Iqlim al-Tuffah area came under 120-mm artillery shelling from the Israeli occupation forces' (al-Zaffatah) positions, hitting the towns of Jarju', Jba', 'Ayn Qana, and 'Ayn Bu Siwar. Earlier this morning, Israeli aircraft flew over villages in Iqlim al-Tuffah and were confronted with antiaircraft fire. The area of (al-Bshar), which is close to Yatar, came under 120- mm artillery shelling from the al-Qawzah position. [passage omitted]

A group of agent Lahd's militiamen stormed Majdal Zun this morning after preparing for the operation with artillery shelling. Seven hours later, Katyusha rockets were fired from the town toward the occupied Arab territories. The agents also booby-trapped a house and kidnapped five youths from the town. [passage omitted]

Seven Israeli gunboats have been cruising the coast extending from al-Naqurah up to Ra's al-'Ayn and have directed fire toward al- 'Amiriyah park. Meanwhile, helicopters have been seen flying over the area.

Eyewitnesses have reported that Grad rockets were fired from Wadi al-Izziyah, near Tyre, toward the occupied territories last night. The area where the rockets fell has not been identified.

Army, Palestinians Clash in al-Buss Camp in Tyre

NC1807085291 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0815 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] According to a security report from the south, an exchange of fire involving machine guns and rockets took place between the Lebanese Army positions around the al-Buss camp in Tyre and the Palestinians at dawn today. The report added that one of the Army positions in the camp area came under fire from inside the camp at 0100 today. The Army returned the fire, the Palestinians broadened their firing line, and the Army responded. The clashes continued until 0400. The report did not mention any casualties.

Israeli 18 Jul Activity in South Detailed

NC1807122491 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] Extreme tension prevails in the south as fear mounts regarding possible hostile actions by the Zionist enemy, particularly since the recent threats made by the occupation forces officers and the agent Lahd group against the villages adjoining the occupied border strip. These threats came to fruition yesterday when Majdal Zun was raided, approximately 25 houses were set on fire, nine people were detained, and around 80 percent of the residents left the village for more secure areas.

At about 1040 today, enemy artillery emplacements on Buslayya hill shelled the outskirts of Jba'. The shelling lasted approximately 45 minutes and inflicted heavy damage to crops and property.

An Israeli patrol fired on the road extending from Dayr Siryan to the Israeli position in 'Alman and al-Shumariyah at 0900 today. The operation included the al-Litani river basin and the outskirts of Zawtar al-Sharqiyah and Zawtar al-Gharbiyah. Israeli mechanized movements were seen in the 'Alman-al-Shumariyah area last night, and enemy aircraft made frequent flights over the south at 1100 today.

Israelis 'Attack' Civilian Car, Kill Two

NC1807090491 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0800 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] The series of crimes committed by the Israeli enemy is continuing, and the latest incident occurred at midnight last night when rocket-propelled grenades were fired at a civilian car carrying seven civilians from Haddathah on the Haddathah-'Ayta al-Jabal- Tibnin road. The attack set the car on fire, killed two female passengers, and wounded four others. Three UN Interim Force in Lebanon vehicles subsequently arrived at the attack site. An ambulance from the Irish UN contingent evacuated the wounded and the martyrs to the Tibnin, Jabal 'Amil, and al-Ra'i hospitals.

Lebanese Forces Militia Closes Overseas Offices

NC1707161191 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] AFP reports from Paris that the Lebanese Forces militia has decided to close down four of its five offices abroad, including the Paris office, effective June 1991 [date as received] because of political and financial reasons. The agency said that the Lebanese Forces will close its offices in Britain, Italy, and Brazil, and reduce the number of staff in the Washington office.

Al-Asad, Mubarak Discuss Proposed Peace Process

JN1707181491 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] At 1300 today, President Hafiz al-Asad and Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak began talks in a closed meeting at the Presidential Palace. They were joined later by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, and Dr. 'Usamah al-Baz, director of the Egyptian president's Office for Political Affairs.

The discussion revolved around all aspects of the general situation in the region and the proposed peace process in light of President al-Asad's reply to President Bush and the contacts under way in this regard. In addition, Arab views on the next stage were discussed. They agreed to continue contacts, consultations, and coordination between Syria and Egypt in all matters of interest to the two countries and the Arab nation.

The discussions were interrupted by a working lunch attended by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruq al- Shar', Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, and Dr. 'Usamah al-Baz, director of the Egyptian president's Office for Political Affairs.

Brief Press on Talks

JN1707182391 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1740 GMT 17 Jul 91

["Proceedings" of press meeting held by President Hafiz al-Asad and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak with chief editors of Syrian and Egyptian newspapers "at the end of their talks" at the Presidential Palace on 17 July—read by announcer]

[Text] The first question was addressed to His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, asking him to shed light on his talks with His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad.

President Mubarak said: Friendship and personal ties exist between myself and brother President Hafiz al-Asad, not to mention Egyptian and Syrian history and the very strong ties and links binding the two countries and peoples throughout history. Our meetings are aimed at enabling us to get acquainted with regional issues, the most important of which is the Palestine question. Concerning the tour the U.S. secretary of state will make following the positive reply President Hafiz al-Asad sent on the U.S. proposals, we are discussing what will happen after that. It has been proved to the world that we seek peace. Egypt wants peace and so does Syria. Moreover, Syria made moves in the direction of peace. Hence, we discussed the upcoming phase and what will happen in it. We also discussed how we are to tackle the circumstances in the upcoming phase and also what the United States will do in the aftermath of the positive Syrian reply to facilitate a peace conference to find a comprehensive solution to the issue.

Of course, we also touched on the Gulf war and the current situation and circumstances. I think that you are well aware of the fact that I addressed messages to Saddam Husayn. The following was the text of the most recent message: Please assess the situation fully and consider it carefully; then make the proper decision that will spare Iraq and the Iraqi people any losses. This was almost a summation of our talks for today.

Question: Your Excellency President Mubarak: Given the Israeli disobedience of international legitimacy and in view of the Syrian response to President Bush's proposals, how do you envisage the future of peace efforts and the mechanism for these efforts?

President Mubarak: Since President Hafiz al-Asad accepted the U.S. initiative, there has been nothing official from Israel. There are Israeli statements. These statements are different, but an official and real Israeli stand has not yet appeared. Hence, we will not hasten to draw a conclusion, pending a meeting with the U.S. secretary of state. The Israeli foreign minister might come to Egypt in the future so that we can talk to him on the same issue.

Question: Is it possible for the United States to apply pressure on Israel?

Mubarak: I do not use the word pressure, because everybody rejects it. I use the language of the age and say: It is inevitable that the United States and Israel be convinced of the need to move toward a solution and peace. There are numerous interests which help the materialization of a conviction on this.

Question: Your Excellency the President: The Syrian response, in fact, came at an important time and placed the ball in the Israeli court. Would you explain the nature and content of this response, your concept of the UN role in the peace process, and in what form it will be?

President Hafiz al-Asad: You know that the discussions with the Americans were long vis-a-vis the first ideas they presented to us to achieve peace in the region. The important thing is that our discussions finally produced a group of points and ideas. I expect that the Americans did the same thing with the Israelis and with our brothers in other Arab countries.

The consultations and contacts continued, of course, with brother President Husni Mubarak and the brothers in Egypt. The discussions between Egypt and the Americans continued as well.

President Bush included a group of proposals that were crystallized in a letter addressed to Syria. We studied these proposals carefully, stemming from the principles we have always announced and reiterated in previous meetings, taking into consideration also the new situations in the regional and international arenas. What is important is that we took into consideration our permanent desire to achieve a just and comprehensive peace.

In light of all this, we studied the message and found that it contained adequately balanced points. They are still related to the form. Regarding such issues, however, it is difficult to practically separate the form and substance. Despite this, we say that they are related to the form. I, in particular, and the officials in the government and the National Front discussed this issue and decided to agree because the points were appropriate to a certain degree and the grounds were based on the related UN resolutions 242 and 338. As you know, there were also President Bush's speech before the U.S. Congress and other ideas that were expressed by the Americans in the form of statements and speeches which we all heard.

In light of all this, we decided to agree on what we might call the U.S. peace plan or the U.S. initiative and which we might give other names.

Question: What about the U.S. points, Your Excellency?

Al-Asad: It might be early to speak about the points in detail, not because there are things that harm us, the Arab side, and not because there are things that might be exploited by the Israeli side, but out of regard for the basic rules and out of respect for the confidentiality of transactions on important issues between heads of state. This is despite the fact that it might be an obligation to speak about such matters, but only when this must be done. I do not think that there is anything urgent now that would make us address these points.

Question: Are you satisfied with the role the United Nations could play through the recent U.S.-Syrian dialogues and the Syrian reply?

Al-Asad: Yes and to an appropriate level. It is not easy to explain this matter to you and convince you of it because it took me some time before I was convinced that the group of supportive elements—or to be more precise, the elements that constitute a role for the United Nations—form an important role that we want from the United Nations, for the United Nations exists through its resolutions and the observers to which the U.S. plan refers, and exists through agreements that will also be presented to the United Nations, and they will be endorsed and studied so that a decision can be made on them. The United Nations also exists through some other points. In other words, we can say that there is a group of elements that gives a useful role to the United Nations.

In our culture, the proverb says: "Do you want to have the grapes or to fight the warden?" We want the grapes, although they may not be Syrian or Arab grapes, because peace is of interest to the entire world; therefore, the grapes are for the whole world.

Question: Your Excellency the President: Since this is almost the first plan to be agreed on by Syria, to what degree are you optimistic that it will be achieved?

Al-Asad: As a matter of fact, this is not the first plan to be accepted by Syria. We have accepted Resolution 338, as you know. We in Syria and Egypt accepted this resolution following the October War and accepted the Geneva Conference formula. This is because Resolution 338 says that peace should be achieved through appropriate auspices and contacts among the Arabs, Americans, Soviets, and Israelis.

At that time a peace conference was considered to be the appropriate formula, and a peace conference was held in Geneva. This conference was adopted by a resolution from the Security Council. This conference held the first session. Legally speaking, the conference still stands because it has not declared itself canceled and no one canceled it. Naturally, the conference has neither achieved its objectives nor completed its mission so legally speaking, it still exists.

It is true that at that time Syria did not attend the first session. This was not because it did not accept the conference. Syria's seat was empty, as was shown on television. Syria had planned to attend later sessions. It did not attend the opening session because there were matters which would take me a long time to describe now.

We and Egypt—the two parties to the dispute from the Arab side and the two parties to the war—were asked to go to the conference while we had been in disagreement. Neither Syria nor Egypt wanted that; it was something that others wanted. Since we were pressed for time, there was no time to solve that problem. Therefore, we failed to show up at the first session. What is important is that since then we agreed to a peace conference, but subsequent developments did not provide the appropriate chance.

As I said, we approved this plan because it indicates that work will be done to achieve a just, comprehensive peace. Because it has been proved that we Arabs are one nation, regardless of what we as individual states do, if a minor issue or small gap remains unresolved, there will be no peace. By peace we mean the peace we want, and that contributes to stability and the region's development and prosperity.

Most foreign forces and personalities with whom we talked seem to share this conviction. Of course, this is in light of what I hear from them. The plan seeks a comprehensive solution based on UN resolutions and includes some useful procedural points.

As for being optimistic or not, we must definitely be optimistic. It is better to be optimistic. As to whether there are objective bases for optimism, if we pick up the statements of some Israeli officials, we of course, find that they do not call for optimism. I believe, however, that we should not take this as a basis for our optimism or pessimism. The historical experience is definitely not encouraging. We must say what we have to say, however, and the Israelis must say what they have to say, and let the world be the judge between us. These issues need a lot of time.

What is important is that there is a proposed plan, whether we are optimistic or pessimistic. We have positively assessed the pillars of this plan, and on this basis we said yes. As you know, there is a peace conference plan. This conference is a peace conference. Regardless of names, it is a conference of an international nature; it will be attended by the United States, the Soviet Union, Europe, and the United Nations.

Regarding the United Nations, I want to say that calling it an observer changes nothing about the role of the UN representative because an observer, as in ordinary conferences, assemblies, and everywhere else, takes part in discussions and the conference's activities but does not vote. All of us know that the conference we are talking about is not a voting conference. No one will vote—neither us, nor the Israelis, nor the big powers; there is no voting. Therefore, an observer and nonobserver are equal in this regard. Our aim is to achieve a proper democracy.

Further on Press Meeting

JN1707214791 Damascus SANA in Arabic 2000 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Excerpts] Damascus, 17 Jul (SANA)—President Hafiz al-Asad and Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak met at the conclusion of their talks today at the Presidential Palace with the chief editors of Syrian and Egyptian newspapers.

The two presidents answered questions directed to them dealing with the major issues under discussion in the Arab arena, especially those dealing with just and comprehensive peace in the region. Following are the proceedings of the news conference. [passage omitted]

Question: Mr. President, more than one Arab side will take part in the conference. You and President Mubarak are coordinating your actions. Does the coming stage need greater coordination to include the rest of the Arab sides to the conference?

President Hafiz al-Asad: Definitely, we—that is, Syria and Egypt, I and my brother President Mubarak—discussed this topic during these past few hours and previous meetings. Contacts between us continue extensively on various levels, on the levels of the two presidents, the two foreign ministers, and various other levels.

We agree that whenever we feel the need for greater issues we will resort to them, but so far these are the ideas we have. We will take every new development as warranted. We might need to expand our scope in one way or another or hold more contacts. Of course we care about a comprehensive solution; therefore, as we said, anyone concerned about this comprehensive solution will definitely be of interest to Syria and Egypt.

Question: How do you see the form of Palestinian representation in the coming conference?

President Husni Mubarak: The subject has two sides to it because there are some opinions on the Palestinian front and the independent delegation. You have heard what the Israeli opposition has to say in this field. There is another front that believes a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation should be formed. The problem does not lie either in this or that issue. We want to form the delegation so that we can start the peace process. Whether it is a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation or a purely Palestinian delegation, the point still remains that there are disputes regarding its formation. Israel wants it to be a delegation from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank only. We continue to tell the Palestinians inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip that they do not represent all Palestinians. There must by all means be some representation of Palestinians outside, no matter what definition is used for this representation. We cannot ignore the Palestinians outside since they are greater in number than the Palestinians inside. We cannot forget this subject. If we even think about ignoring these people, it means the peace process will falter. I do not want the Israeli Government to exploit what I am saying and start complicating the process regarding representation from inside and outside. If we want a real peace, Palestinian representation must definitely be fair.

Question: Experts in world politics say that by replying to President Bush, Syria pushed the ball into the Israeli court. What do you expect if Israel maintains its adherence to the well known no's and to its settlement policy?

Al-Asad: In any case, this issue is currently the focus of world attention. This is what is being said by many parties in the world. This world community must judge in light of stands and results. If the results prove to be as you indicated, the world community must demonstrate a proper stand. Of course, I do not rule out the possibility that the Israeli stand might remain unchanged. I may find myself inclined to say that this is the most probable likelihood. I do not, however, wish to see this happen. Past experience has shown that Israel is intransigent and that it does not want to achieve true peace in the region. As you are well aware, they—or some of them—are talking of a golden age. You must follow this very carefully. We also want it to be a golden age but for the whole world and for our Arab nation as well. It is unreasonable to wish a golden age for the world and to exclude the Arabs from reaping the benefits of such an age.

Question: What is the difference between the plan that Your Excellency presented—the one which is under consideration—and the Camp David framework which was meant to be used to resolve the problem of the occupied territories?

Al-Asad: Each plan had its own circumstances. Undoubtedly, there are numerous differences, but since you are talking to me on an issue that has something to do with President Anwar al-Sadat and me, we were, as you are well aware, really friends. On the personal level, I was really saddened by what happened to al-Sadat, but

as you know, we had our political differences later. I know that at one time some brothers wrote something about what I told President al-Sadat during his last visit. I would like to say that what was written in this regard was baseless. As for whoever wrote this, he never heard it. He writes saying that he heard, saw, or was told something, but what he said was untrue. I met with President al-Sadat for seven hours. We held discussions in an atmosphere of long-held trust. We waged war together. Together, we and President Mubarak planned for this war. He used to follow up on details regarding this planning. He was a contact. He was the main contact. Hence, discussions were prompted by keenness, at least on my part, for us to remain united brothers working for a peace that would properly restore our rights and safeguard the sublime meanings we cherish. If the brother who wrote this wants to know the details, I will furnish him with the details in due course. Things were contrary to what he wrote. President al-Sadat asked me to endorse. I said: Sorry for being unable to do so.

I remember the last thing he said: In any case, I am going and I want you to remain silent. If I succeed, that would be fine. If I do not succeed, you know your friend Husni Mubarak, you know him well. You may continue the march with him.

Of course, in the atmosphere of frankness and truthfulness which marked my relationship with President al-Sadat, I attempted to move toward peace with him but in accordance with the approach we had agreed upon. Anyway, he had his opinion and decided to pursue different means. There are real differences, however, not just in terms of the time factor on the Arab and world scenes. There are differences which I do not want to talk about because 20 people in Egypt, which has a population of 55 million, might be saddened by what I could say. What I seek is also to win these 20 people over to my side.

In any case, you know that we had good relations with President al-Sadat in particular for many years. A difficult time passed, and what happened, happened. We are now overcoming what happened by cooperating among ourselves. Regardless of the personal whims and the desire sometimes to move to the right or left, history proved that what is between the two countries is stronger than all this. It is a great history; white pages, great victories, and confrontation with all the invaders that targeted this nation. I do not want to be rhetorical here, I am addressing a subject that was reiterated by history. As I believe, we are all good readers of our history. From our knowledge of history and from our view of history, we can become optimistic or pessimistic.

In my opinion, when relations between Syria and Egypt deteriorate, the situation of the Arab nation will worsen. This was the case in the old history and in the near past and the present. The situation will not change in the future. We do not need evidence because you all know the evidence. Every time we were coherent, we achieved good things for the two countries and the whole nation. God willing, this will be the case in the future.

Question: Have you agreed on common concepts to face the tasks of the coming stage?

Mubarak: We should speak about a concept, what to do, and how to move in the coming stage. Of course we discussed how to help in the process to enter into negotiations, how we see the conference when it convenes, and what the course of action in the conference will be. We should discuss all these points. After every stage we speak, discuss things, and coordinate for the coming stage.

Al-Asad: Coordination between us is complete, and the search for concepts is continuous in this meeting and the previous meetings. It will continue to be so in the future.

Question: After accepting the U.S. plan, what will be the next step?

Al-Asad: Baker will visit the region as he announced and as they have informed Syria and Egypt. We will see what proposals he has. We, of course, have an idea on the next step and we talked about it. This, however, is our view, the view of the Arab side. We will see what the United States will present in its capacity as the main mediator.

Question: Do the U.S. plan or initiative and Your Excellency's response to them deal with Israel's occupation of the Golan as a basic element?

Al-Asad: Of course it is a basic element. Every inch of Arab territory is a basic element, regardless of its size. The initiative deals with Resolutions 242 and 338 which apply to all Arab fronts, including the Golan Heights, as well as to Palestinian rights.

Question: Can we say that there is joint Egyptian-Syrian vision on the issue of Palestinian representation? If there is such a vision, can we at least expect that King Husayn and the Palestinians would join this vision on representation shortly?

Al-Asad: At any rate, Syria and Egypt are committed to the Palestine question. We have asserted this in our meeting today and in all our previous meetings. Proceeding from our commitment to the Palestine question, however, we basically take into consideration the view of the Palestinian people, Palestinian leaderships, and Palestinian organizations. We in Egypt and Syria have offered hundreds of thousands of martyrs for the sake of this cause, but this is our duty. We did not offer sacrifices for the sake of an individual or individuals, because this cause is that of a people who are part of our nation and part of us. It is impossible for us to relinquish this issue. Within the framework of our perceptions and in light of what is required for every step and every stage, we will definitely try to achieve the requirements of this cause. Definitely. Nothing will take place in isolation from the Palestinians. In other words, there will be an agreement with them.

We continue to extend support and backing to them, however, as we have always done. We are still at an early stage, as you may observe, but as for why we have not answered all the questions, we have our own perceptions. We have not reached tangible matters which require discussion.

Question: We believe that this international conference must hold its first session at least before the beginning of the U.S. election campaign. When do you think such a conference will be held, if Israel agrees?

Al-Asad: The Arab side is enthusiastic and willing to attend such a conference. The U.S. side also seems to be enthusiastic. Western states in general and the Eastern states, as you hear and read, seem to be enthusiastic as well. There is only the Israeli problem. If it shows a willingness with some enthusiasm and approves the U.S. proposals, a conference may be held soon.

Question: Can Syrian-Israeli negotiations on the Golan Heights start before the negotiations on the West Bank and Gaza strip?

Al-Asad: I cannot talk about purely technical matters, like whether one thing will proceed another by a meter or so. What I know is that a solution will be comprehensive. I do not recall that for many years I talked about who will be ahead of the other, and we have not discussed such a matter. A solution must be comprehensive. In other words, there are no Palestinian, Syrian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc., issues which are to be resolved separately. We are always looking forward to a comprehensive solution that achieves peace. As I said, peace can only be general and comprehensive.

I welcome a speedy solution to the Palestine question. That means speedy progress with the Palestinian problem.

Question: Since Israeli demands on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are much greater, will the issue of the West Bank and Gaza Strip falter, while the solution for the Golan Heights proceeds, since Israel makes no demands on them?

Al-Asad: This is why we judge things by their results and insist that the solution has to be a general and comprehensive one.

Question: In the final analysis, will the two issues be linked?

Al-Asad: Peace will be one.

Question: Are you optimistic about serious progress in the peace process?

Mubarak: I wish from the bottom of my heart that serious progress does take place and that we reach a comprehensive peace so that the region can live in peace, security, and safety.

Question: Have you discussed means of implementing Resolution 425 which stipulates Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon?

Mubarak: We did not discuss this subject fully. It is taking its course and there are no obstacles now for us to discuss.

Al-Asad: President Mubarak and myself discussed Lebanon, but we did not get to this stage. Efforts to implement Resolution 425 are still at their beginning.

Question: Does the subject of security forces in the Gulf and postponing discussion of this subject until September have anything to do with the peace process currently under way in the region?

Mubarak: Regarding security in the Gulf, I believe some media organs have said there are obstacles, while others say there are none. This subject must be understood by everyone. It is not necessary that we, Syria and Egypt, have a permanent presence in the Gulf countries. Neither do we impose ourselves and insist on having a permanent presence in the Gulf. We are ready, however—and we did say this many times—to participate in defense operations if it is necessary. We do not wish to be there permanently, but if a sisterly Arab country calls for help in defending itself, we cannot delay in responding to that call.

There are many rumors issued by many parties about individual incidents. One of these rumors is that this state or that demands huge amounts of money. This is not at all true. If a country cannot defend itself and calls for help from others, then we will never delay.

Al-Asad: Even the amendments which the media spoke of do not concern substantial issues. It is our view in Syria and Egypt that the two countries do not have a vested interest in keeping forces in the Gulf region permanently if there are no reasons for such a presence.

Question: Your Excellency President Mubarak, news agencies said that you received a message from Saddam Husayn in reply to a message you have sent to him through a third party. Does the reply give the impression that the Iraqi regime will implement and comply with the UN Security Council resolutions?

Mubarak: The reply was published in newspapers. In the reply, they said that they have two nuclear programs. One of the two programs was clandestine, and they destroyed it so that they will not have to pay prohibitive costs for its destruction by the United Nations. The other program was public and declared. They said they informed the United Nations of both programs. They asked the Arab League to form a delegation to see the sites and to ascertain that Iraq is implementing the UN resolutions. They added that they would accept an Egyptian delegation, if it is impossible for an Arab League delegation to go to the sites. I cannot speak on behalf of the Arab nation. I think the Arab League secretary general sent messages to Arab League members

to probe their opinions on this. Thus, the decision lies with members of the Arab League. I did not ask Saddam Husayn to implement or refrain from implementing; I only asked him to assess the situation and to make the proper decision to spare the Iraqi people and Iraq numerous calamities.

Question: Did he assess the situation?

Mubarak: I only seek to keep my conscience at ease. In the past I spoke to him and sent him messages out of high sincerity and respect. I had no pretensions. I only sent him sincere advice. I was sure about this because I had an experience in this field. Likewise, my brother President Hafiz al-Asad had a similar experience in this field. I offered him advice. Had he withdrawn in the aftermath of the appeal addressed to him before the start of the air war, he would have put the world community at an impasse. I advised him similarly 48 hours prior to the start of the ground war. I asked him to accept the conditions set by the U.S. President and the coalition states because I did not view them as surrendering but rather as something that would protect the Iraqi people and the Iraqi Army, but he refused and you know the outcome. Had I had bad faith, I would not have advised him. I had hoped that he would heed the advice, but he is of a skeptical disposition. He thought that the Americans were behind what I was doing. Is it reasonable for me to offer advice to a brother and friend because the British and French want me to facilitate his fall into their trap? Absolutely not. I am neither used to doing this nor to lying. Likewise, I am not used to offering a piece of advice about which I am not convinced.

Question: The permanent members of the Security Council gave the Iraqi president a new deadline, otherwise there would be a possibility to deal a new blow to him. If this happens, will Syria participate with the coalition forces in this blow?

Al-Asad: Certainly not. Since the beginning, we did not target Iraq. We were pained in Syria and in Egypt for what was inflicted on Iraq. The people of Iraq are part of our nation. Their present situation makes us sad, but if we cannot prevent the destruction inflicted on the people of Iraq, we should be able to prevent the expansion of destruction so that it will not cover a larger area in this nation, its land, and its people. I believe that we in Syria and Egypt did our utmost; we hoped that we could save Iraq from the pains to which it was exposed. In fact Syria and Egypt, as my brother President Husni Mubarak said, did what they could to prevent what took place from happening. I believe you are aware of the exchange of letters and contacts. President Mubarak sent letters and Syria sent letters in one way or another because, as you know, the nature of relations was different. Syria's relationship with the Iraqi leadership only allowed specific contacts. The stands, however, were practical.

We addressed a letter to him in the last difficult moments, after all the mediation attempts and international efforts had ended and things appeared to move toward conflagration. I addressed a letter to him, linking the fate of Syria with the fate of Iraq if it is attacked after it withdraws from Kuwait. I asked him to withdraw from Kuwait with dignity and pride, and after this, if Iraq is attacked, Syria will fight on Iraq's side with all its potential. I said this to him because there were people who said that Iraq would be hit even if it withdraws from Kuwait. The Iraqi leadership could have had this in mind. Therefore I gave a clear pledge that was broadcast to our people and to the Arab citizens in general. Despite this, I received a very regrettable answer. It is unbelievable. There was no linkage in terms of spirit or in terms of text, form, and content between what I wrote and what I received. Therefore, we were unable to save Iraq from what happened, and we acted to safeguard or prevent a deterioration or additional deterioration of the Arab homeland.

Of course, we hope that what is being noted in this stage in terms of hitting Iraq will not happen. I deeply hope that this will not happen. In any case, if it happens we will say what is within us.

It is not convenient at all that the Iraqi people be hit. It is regrettable, however, that the Iraqi people are being hit first from within.

Question: In view of the long-standing relations between Damascus and Tehran, and in view of your profound experience, do you believe that there is hope for new Arab-Iranian relations and for the Iranians to give up the exportation of revolution and their demand for a role in the Gulf?

Al-Asad: In light of our experience, achieving good, stable, and positive relations between Iran and Egypt, Syria, and other Arab states is a possibility. Naturally, we are not willing to be under anyone's custodianship. Likewise, the Iranians are not under our custodianship. They have their own political trends which are linked with a certain ideology. We, the Arabs, have our own ideology and thoughts. What is important, however, is our relations as states and the reflections of our foreign policies on each other. In this regard, we can reach balanced and stable relations. When we hear a statement from Iran that we might like or dislike, this does not necessarily represent a state policy. Iran is an influential state in the Gulf under all circumstances. No one can deny its role, and we—the Arabs—have no interest in denying such a role. Iran is an ancient country with political, military, and economic weight. It is in our interest as well as Iran's to be in accord with each other. We—the Arabs—not only our brothers in the Gulf, are interested in good relations with Iran.

Mubarak Leaves Damascus

JN1707180191 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1735 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Excerpt] Damascus, 17 Jul (SANA) —President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt left Damascus at 1900 today. [passage omitted]

Al-Asad Sets 'Wheels of Peace in Motion'

JN1707141891 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Amid favorable reactions to Syria's positive response to U.S. President Bush's letter on the peace proposals, international circles continue to appreciate al-Asad's clear and constructive position on peace moves in the region and his responsiveness—as contained in his recent letter to President Bush—to every earnest effort aimed at sparing the Middle East the danger of wars, which has destabilized our region for more than 40 years.

The Syrian response is in line with Syria's principles and convictions about the Arab-Israeli conflict and the means to resolve it. It is also in harmony with Arab interests in general and Palestinian interests in particular, and once again sets the wheels of peace in motion and drives the major international forces and blocs toward further understanding the conflict in the region. For centuries, Israel has been trying to forge and obliterate these facts using major mass media and international forums.

The big seven industrialized countries, which have recently met in London, did not conceal their welcome of our response to Bush's letter, nor did they conceal their desire to act promptly, using the opportunity provided by Syria and capitalizing on U.S. efforts in particular, to make further steps toward peace. These countries did not hesitate to demand an immediate Israeli halt to the settlement policy, which the entire world now believes is the main obstacle to any form of peace or any useful proposal to ease and resolve the crisis. The statement of the seven industrialized nations was clear in defining the basis for peace in the region; namely, the principle of territory for peace and the UN resolutions, especially 242 and 338. Syria has accepted this foundation and in light of it, built its position on President Bush's letter.

Israel alone—and only hours after the issuance of the London declaration—is rejecting and turning its back on that foundation and announcing through Shamir that it will not stop settlements and that its earlier rejection of Bush's proposal is still valid. Israel stands alone on the wide international stage. It is not concerned about anything said about peace or about the efforts the world is making for its sake. It stands in defiance of international legitimacy and all world forces trying to build the new world order on the bases of security, stability, and justice.

Baker's upcoming tour will allow him to see firsthand many aspects of Israel's position that seemed to him vague during his previous tours. Israel is now more determined to reject the very idea of peace. All its maneuvers are now exposed, and it has no choice but to acknowledge that it was originally established to perpetrate aggression and wars, not to uphold security and peace.

Now that the world knows their good intentions and seriousness to achieve peace, the Arabs, undoubtedly, are in a strong position in the current battle for peace. On the other hand, Israel's maneuvers are exposed. The Arabs need to show further coordination and understanding, especially between Damascus and Cairo, whose coordination and understanding has always been for the good of all Arabs and in the interest of all their issues. This is what is actually happening at all levels.

Press Review on al-Asad's Talks With Mubarak

JN1807071691 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0330 GMT 18 Jul 91

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "In the Interest of the Nation's Issues," AL-THAWRAH stresses today that it goes without saying that meetings between Syria and Egypt have been, are, and will continue to be the foundation of joint Arab action. This joint Arab action has influenced the course of events and their repercussions, no matter how serious or critical, throughout time—in ancient and modern Arab history, and particularly contemporary history. Based on the very important developments in the region and the international position toward the region's crisis caused by President Hafiz al-Asad's reply to U.S. President George Bush's proposals for a peace conference to find a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on UN resolutions, the meeting between Syria and Egypt was needed to consult and coordinate on all issues of interest to the two countries and the Arab nation.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Therefore, the purpose of President Husni Mubarak's brief visit to Damascus yesterday and his talks with President Hafiz al-Asad was to lay down the new Arab concepts for the coming phase in light of the content of the president's response to the U.S. President. This letter embodied the pan-Arab position on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine question, which calls for launching a peace process in the region to resolve the crisis based on international legitimacy resolutions and under the auspices of legitimacy with a peace conference on the region's crisis to be attended by the United States, the Soviet Union, the European Community, and all parties to the conflict.

The paper adds: President Mubarak's talks with President al-Asad during these critical circumstances are as vital they are useful and constructive because they pave the way for joint Arab action to carry out its full pan-Arab duty to support and consolidate the Arab position represented in the Syrian ideas in order to reach a just and comprehensive solution to the region's crisis under the auspices of international legitimacy and on the basis of its resolutions. These resolutions call for Israel's

withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people, including their right to self- determination.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: Hence, the meeting between Syria and Eygpt, no matter where or when, especially now, will certainly be in the interest of the Arab nation and its general and crucial issues, foremost being the Palestine question—the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the focal point of the contemporary Arab struggle.

Syrian Reply Gives Israel 'No Window To Escape'

JN1807105591 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0730 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] Damascus, 18 Jul (SANA)—TISHRIN says in its editorial today that Syria's positive response to the U.S. initiative has left Israel with no window to escape from the requirements of peace. The important facts and dimensions of the positive Syrian response, says the paper, are clearly evident in Israel's current predicament. The entire world attests that this response has turned enemy calculations upside down and rendered Shamir's government unable to continue the campaigns of deception in which Arabs are portrayed as unwilling to make peace.

The paper says it is high time that Israel officially and unequivocally defined its position. The urgent question which enemy leaders must answer is whether or not Israel will comply with the resolutions of international legitimacy and whether or not it will accept the principles of peace and approve the implementation o' Resolutions 242 and 338 through a peace conference attended by all parties to the conflict and with the participation of the United Nations, the Soviet Union, the United States, and the European Community.

TISHRIN concludes that the positive Syrian response has placed all sides, without exception, in front of a clear, specific priority: increasing pressure on Israel so that it will accept a just and comprehensive peace, abandon the policy of intransigence and defiance of international legitimacy, and terminate the aggressive and expansionist Zionist designs, which have brought only destruction, instability, and tension to the region and threatened peace and security in the world at large.

Afghanistan

Clashes Between Mujahidin, Kabul Forces Reported

BK1807062591 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0600 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] Reports from Afghanistan speak of fresh clashes between Afghan mujahidin and the Kabul regime forces at (?several) places. The mujahidin attacked several Kabul posts in (Shah Babol) area of Vardak Province and inflicted heavy losses in men and material on Kabul forces, besides overrunning a post. In Chahar Asiab District of Kabul, the mujahidin attacked security posts, killing 23 Kabul soldiers, destroying two posts, and capturing a large quantity of arms and ammunition.

Mujahidin Release Detained French Worker

BK1707122991 Hong Kong AFP in English 1206 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Quetta, Pakistan, July 17 (AFP)—French aid worker Xavier Bouan was freed Wednesday after being held 12 days by a fundamentalist rebel commander in southern Afghanistan, a reliable source here said. Mr. Bouan, 30, arrived here at mid-day and told a French diplomat in Islamabad that he was "very bitter," but in good health. His release followed "various pressures" made particularly by Pakistan, which supports Afghan rebels fighting the Soviet-backed government in Kabul, Western sources said. Mr. Bouan arrived in Quetta, capital of Baluchistan province, together with employees of a U.S. organization, Development Alternative Inc., which had sent him to Afghanistan on an agricultural project. He had been held against his will since July 5 in Zabol province by Baz Mohammad, who is affiliated with the fundamentalist Ittehad- e-Islami faction, according to several sources. He was in the same area where about a dozen vehicles belonging to several organizations, including the United Nations, had been intercepted since the beginning of this month. Some officials have linked the incident to banditry, while others suspect malcontent among Afghan mojahedin towards U.S. intention to suspend military aid.

ICRC Suspends Activity Over 'Growing Incidents'

BK1707124191 Hong Kong AFP in English 1226 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Kabul, July 17 (AFP)—The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Wednesday suspended its operations in the western Afghan Province of Herat and the northern city of Mazar-e- Sharif, citing security problems.

"We have suspended all our activities in these two regions because of growing incidents involving our staff," an ICRC official said, after the humanitarian agency shut down its medical aid facilities to war victims.

Protest to Pakistan Over Looting of Relics

LD1707184791 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The Pakistani charge d'affaires was summoned this morning to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where a protest from the government of the Republic of Afghanistan was conveyed to him by the director of the first political directorate in letter No. 897 dated 17 July.

Authentic reports say that recently, a number of Pakistani archaeologists illegally entered the territory of the Republic of Afghanistan with armed groups associated with Golboddin, Sayaf, and Khales and embarked on a series of excavations in the area of Ajarki, Diani Qala, Dargo, Kafari, Shahr-e Gholghola, Shahr-e Zohak, and Sarposha in Bamian province. As a result, they have stolen a quantity of jewelry and Kufi scripts written on 42 deer hides. A quantity of jewelry and deer hides, which were in the possession of (Khan Ali), a resident of Ghorat village in Bamian province and an associate of Golboddin, have also been sold to Pakistani archeologists for 3 million afghanis. Reports also say that a Pakistani citizen by name of (Gol Rahman), who illegally entered the territory of the Republic of Afghanistan, was captured red-handed by Afghan security forces while he was stealing an 1,800 year-old statue of Buddha and some metal coins from the time of Kushanis. He has confessed to his crime.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Afghanistan strongly protests against these predatory acts of Pakistani agents, who embark on looting the ancient and historic relics of the people of Afghanistan, despite the fact that they are violating international conventions on the protection of ancient relics. The ministry resolutely asks the government of Pakistan to prevent the looting of historic and ancient relics that are treasures of the people of Afghanistan.

Ministry Buys Stinger From Golboddin Forces

LD1707174791 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1730 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] A Stinger surface-to-air missile was bought in the environs of Kabul today by organs of the Ministry of State Security from groups associated with the fundamentalist group of Golboddin [Hekmatyar]. The BAKHTAR military section reported to us that the price of the missile was paid to the opposite side in keeping with the relevant decree.

India

More Arrests Made in Gandhi Assassination

BK1707100091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The special investigating team of the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] inquiring into the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi has made some more arrests but the

main culprits, Sivarasan and Subha, are still absconding. However, due to the speedy and vigilant measures taken by the team, the modus operandi of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] has been exposed. Their network of communication and contact have been smashed to a great extent.

'Militancy Problem' To Be Resolved by Consensus

BK1707161191 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The Congress-I leader and parliamentary affairs minister, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, has said that a national consensus will be evolved to resolve the militancy problem in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, and Assam. Addressing meetings of party workers and citizens in Jammu today, Mr. Azad said that Congress-I has decided to seek the cooperation of all political parties in dealing with the national problems without compromising with the basic principles of the party philosophy.

Meanwhile in the state [of Jammu and Kashmir], security forces apprehended 43 suspected subversives, including eight Pakistan-trained militants, in the search operations at different places in the valley since last night.

Efforts are continuing to secure the safe release of the executive director of IOC [Indian Oil Corporation], Mr. K. Doraiswamy. An official spokesman said in New Delhi that the authorities are in touch with the kidnappers to get Mr. Doraiswamy released.

Minister on Plans To End Kashmir 'Terrorism'

BK1807081591 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] Government has initiated a two-pronged approach to stamp out terrorism from Jammu and Kashmir and restore normalcy in the state. Disclosing this in the Lok Sabha today, the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, said that while stringent measures are being taken against terrorists by checking infiltration at the border with Pakistan and raiding their hideouts in the state, political dialgue has also been initiated. Mr. Chavan said motivated campaign by certain agencies about human rights violation by the security forces in the state has now been exposed by a number of independent journalists who visited the valley. The minister assured the members that the government is sparing no efforts to curb the militant violence so that the tourism business in the state is revived to its earlier preeminent status.

Mr. Chavan ruled out destroying training camps in occupied Kashmir run by Pakistani support, but said anybody trying to cross the border into India will be pushed out with full force. He also assured the house that the government is taking steps to tackle the problem through diplomatic and political channels.

Government Working To Bridge Gap With People

BK1707101291 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The government proposes to set up Lok Samitis [people's societies] in Jammu and Kashmir to bridge the gap between the people and the government. Replying to questions in the Rajya Sabha today, the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, said the government is also working on creating more employment opportunities for the youth in the valley. He said vigil on the border is being stepped up at sensitive places and intelligence has been strengthened to deal with the problem of terrorism in the state.

Replying to a supplementary, Mr. Chavan said persons against whom no evidence has been established and who do not have serious charges against them should be released.

Work Group Seeks Boundary Settlement With China

BK1707104591 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1000 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] India and China have agreed to make sincere efforts to seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question. Informing this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha today, the external affairs minister, Mr. Madhavsinh Solanki, also said that a joint working group has been set up to deal with the subject. The minister further informed the house that an agreement has been reached in principle between India and China on reopening the consulate general in Shanghai and Bombay and also to resume border trade.

Security Forces Kill Militant at Pakistan Border

BK1807070091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0630 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] In Rajasthan, one militant was killed in an encounter with the Border Security Force on the Indo-Pakistan border last night. Official sources said in Ganganagar that two other accomplices, however, managed to cross the border under the cover of darkness, leaving behind a large quantity of arms and ammunition.

Iran

Rafsanjani on Importance of Skilled Work Force

LD1707193991 Tehran IRNA in English 1645 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Shahr-e Kord, Charmahal Bakhtiari Prov. 17 July, IRNA—A country's independence and self-sufficiency would not be possible unless it enjoyed a committed and skilled work force, President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani told a group of university professors here Wednesday.

"Nowadays, no country can attain development and perfection without a skilled force, and management in

other countries even in defence and military affairs is based on science and knowledge," Rafsanjani said.

The president added that many third world states desire to use Iranian university professors and therefore "by despatching our professors to those countries we can serve the goals of our revolution through our cultural and spiritual presence."

The Islamic Republic has no serious difficulty in expanding its educational facilities, Rafsanjani said. However, he pointed out that contrary to developed countries, education in Iran was excessively dependent on the government.

Karrubi Assails U.S. Arms Control Plan

LD1707180491 Tehran IRNA in English 1715 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Tehran, 17 July, IRNA—Majles speaker Mehdi Karrubi Wednesday described the U.S.-proposed arms control plan as an excuse for interference in the sensitive middle east region. "We are not against disarmament, but it should apply to all countries," he stressed.

The speaker also accused the U.S. of interfering in the region in a bid to tip the balance of power in favor of Israel and to humiliate regional nations.

Karrubi was speaking to a group of officials including Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, his deputies, Iranian diplomatic corps abroad and organizers of an international conference to support the Palestinian revolution to be held here in October.

On the Islamic Republic's policy of establishing diplomatic relations with the outside world, Karrubi said "while sticking to our principles we can have relations with the outside world except for the U.S., Israel and South Africa."

The Majles speaker said Iran's policies are based on the main causes of the late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeyni.

He called on Iranian diplomats to promote Islam in the countries of their assignment besides carrying out their routine duties.

Report Says PRC To Supply Nuclear Technology

PM1207152691 London SAWT AL-KUWAYT AL-DUWALI in Arabic 11 Jul 91 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "PRC Agrees To Complete Construction of Nuclear Reactor"]

[Excerpts] Tehran, SAWT AL-KUWAYT—Iranian Government sources have told SAWT AL-KUWAYT that the PRC will replace West Germany and France in constructing the Iranian nuclear reactor which these two states started constructing before the outbreak of the Iranian revolution and then refused to complete when the Iraq-Iran war broke out and when the new Iranian leadership abandoned Iran's financial commitments to French and German companies.

The Iranian sources said that PRC Prime Minister Li Peng, who concluded his visit to Iran the day before yesterday, agreed in his talks with President Hashemi-Rafsanjani to provide the necessary expertise and technology for the completion of the Iranian nuclear reactor in accordance with a comprehensive agreement that will make the PRC Iran's biggest trading partner and arms supplier.

SAWT AL-KUWAYT has learned that Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Li Peng have agreed in principle on the substance and framework of the agreement and that trade, technical, military, and scientific joint committees will prepare the draft. [passage omitted]

It is worth noting that, on the last day of his visit to Iran, Li Peng went to Esfahan to see the city's historical sites; but the main purpose of his trip there was to visit the military complexes in the north and west of the city where PRC and North Korean workers and experts are working side by side with the Iranians on projects to produce ballistic missiles and advanced surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles.

The Iranian sources also revealed that Iran and the PRC agreed in principle to increase the volume of their trade exchanges next year to $5 billion. The PRC will launch for Iran a rocket-launched space satellite to help Iran in the fields of radio and television transmission and in reconnaisance and observation. The PRC will also meet the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps' aircraft, tank, and missile requirements and part of its army's requirements. [passage omitted]

The sources say that Iranian Air Force Commander Brigadier General Mansur Satari, who is currently in Moscow, is authorized by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani to sign an agreement with the Soviet military production ministry for the purchase of advanced MIG-29, MIG-31, and Tupolev bombers and reconnaissance aircraft. [passage omitted]

Tehran Views Turkey's Decision on 'Poised Hammer'

NC1707201191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1600 GMT 13 Jul 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Turkish Foreign Minister Safa Giray disclosed two days ago that Ankara has agreed in principle to the temporary deployment of an allied military contingent in Turkey. Consequently, an allied force of 20,000 will be deployed in southeastern Turkey. The initiative made by a number of countries, such as the United States, Britain, and France, to deploy a foreign military unit in Turkey violates Turkey's sovereignty. This situation has caused gradually increasing anxiety in Turkey's political groups and parties.

The deployment of a foreign military force in Turkey will threaten its national sovereignty. It also undoubtedly

will have negative effects on political relations among the region's countries. U.S. officials have claimed that this force, which has been named Poised Hammer, is being established to support the Iraqi Kurds, who have been the victims of Iraqi military attacks in an area close to Turkey's southeastern border. But according to the political experts in the Middle East, the foreign forces are probably trying to achieve two objectives, the most important of which is to establish a military center in the region which will be used against the elements which threaten U.S. interests in this part of the world.

The United States adopted a new political and strategic approach on the Middle East after the Gulf war. The establishment of a permanent and secure military base in the region is an important requirement of this approach. In view of this, it may be said with confidence that helping the Iraqi Kurds is not the objective behind the U.S. move to establish Poised Hammer. The question to be asked at this point is as follows: If the United States is sincerely concerned with the problem of the refugees and feels responsible to support them wherever they may be in the world, then why has it failed to concern itself with the problems of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan for more than 40 years now? Every peace- and freedom-loving individual is upset by the daily reports of Israeli attacks on the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Regardless of this situation, the United States has not reacted against the Zionist regime until now. The truth is that the U.S. officials are trying to use the question of the Kurdish refugees to further torment the Palestinian refugees and strengthen the U.S. and Israeli stands, which aim at destroying the Palestinians' freedom.

In view of this, the regional countries must consider their national and international interests and move to oppose the various conspiracies the United States is trying to hatch in the region, as in the case of Poised Hammer. The political and military problems in the region undoubtedly only can be resolved through cooperation among the region's countries. Any interference by the foreign forces headed by the United States will only complicate the situation.

National Airlines Completes Hajj Flights

LD1707195591 Tehran IRNA in English 1603 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Tehran, 17 July, IRNA—Iran Air today completed flying home more than 115,000 Iranian pilgrims who had attended the hajj ceremonies in Mecca this year. Hasan Shafti, managing director of the airlines, told reporters here today that the pilgrims were flown to Saudi Arabia and returned home on 1,388 flights. A total of 90 cargo flights also brought back the additional luggage of the pilgrims weighed 2,610 tons. Tehran-Jeddah flights were carried out properly in terms of arrangements and quality, however, the return flights faced an initial 15-hour delay due to the special formalities the Saudi Government enforced concerning the passports of all the pilgrims, he said. Shafti categorically refuted rumors spread by foreign media that Iran Air had used foreign airlines for the transport of the Iranian pilgrims, stressing that all the pilgrims were flown to Saudi Arabia and vice versa by the Iran Air planes. He also strongly denied that Iran had used painted Kuwaiti planes which defected to Iran during the Persian Gulf war, in domestic and international flights.

Afghan Opposition Efforts, Western Role Viewed

NC1207154991 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 3 Jul 91 p 13

[Seyyed Javad Afghani commentary: "Behind-the-Scenes Efforts Concerning Afghanistan"]

[Excerpts] World arrogance is seeking to put its pawns in charge in Afghanistan. The Persian Gulf war, the bombing of the Iraqi Muslim nation, and the global defeat of Marxism have all helped make the United States and its allies more brazen in ignoring nations' rights and directly interfering in their affairs, including proposing initiatives such as the Middle East peace plans for the occupied areas in Palestine and the installation of one of their puppets in Afghanistan's future government.

The talks between the leaders of the Afghan "interim government" based in Pakistan and the representative of Hezb-e Vahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party], the Afghan alliance based in Tehran, which were brokered by "influential affiliated" elements, proved fruitless because any proposal to unify the Afghan combatant forces includes a plan to defeat the arrogant forces' plots.

In any case, the special emissary of Zahir Shah, the former Afghan monarch, is holding talks in Pakistan with the Peshawar-based Afghan leaders and with the Pakistani Government to lobby for support for the UN secretary general's five-point plan. [passage omitted]

The United States and its allies are seeking to bring a moderate, pro-Western faction into power because they are extremely fearful that an Islamic government will come into power, as happened in Iran. Some former officials of the Zahir Shah regime who are in Western countries are seeking to portray thmselves as the best option for achieving peace in Afghan society and to portray their old Methuselah [Zahir Shah] as the symbol of peace and tranquillity in Afghanistan.

Zahir Shah was the cause of all the misfortune which befell Afghanistan, and the popularity of Marxism reached its peak during his reign. Muslim scholars, clerics, and students were tortured, imprisoned, and martyred in various ways. One need only look at the condition of pre-revolutionary Afghanistan to judge the achievements of economic growth and industrial progress.

Therefore, until the Islamic Afghan groups come together to grasp the rope of harmony and establish a single government, foreigners and those who went

abroad and remained indifferent during the revolution, including Zahir Shah's clique, will continue to interfere in Afghanistan's affairs.

Sudanese Official Meets With Karrubi 17 Jul

LD1707142291 Tehran IRNA in English 1321 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Tehran, 17 July, IRNA—Relations between Tehran and Khartoum and other matters of mutual interest were discussed by visiting member of Sudan's Command Council Brigadier General Sulayman Muhammad Sulayman and Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam Mehdi Karrubi, here Wednesday.

Sulayman saying Tehran-Khartoum relations were under transformation noted that the two countries have managed to lay the foundation for cement ties.

He also accused certain countries of the region of helping Sudanese rebels in the South with the goal to eliminate Islamic tendencies in northern Africa.

Karrubi said Iran has been the target of Washington's largest acts of aggression since the victory of the Islamic revolution in 1979 and expressed regret that the revolutionary nation and government of Sudan were exposed to such plots.

"The assistance of various Islamic states such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt to the rebels in southern Sudan aimed to put pressure on the Khartoum government is a big treason against Islam. The objective of such help to the enemies of Islam was to suppress Muslims," Karrubi said.

He said Muslims now had a great duty of encountering U.S. moves against intifadah, the Palestinian uprising in occupied lands and helping the expansionist policy of the Qods occupying regime.

Karrubi said the Iranian Parliament was preparing to host an international conference to support the Islamic revolution of Palestine in October.

He pledged that the Islamic Republic would stand by the revolutionary nation and Government of Sudan under any circumstances.

The Sudanese official arrived in Tehran Tuesday.

Deputy Foreign Minister Meets Kuwaiti Envoy

LD1607042691 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Protram Network in Persian 1930 GMT 15 Jul 91

[Text] The Kuwaiti ambassador in Tehran met and conferred with Deputy Foreign Minister Besharati on Monday. At the meeting, the Kuwaiti ambassador conveyed to the deputy foreign minister the gratitude of the Kuwaiti crown prince for Iran's stand on the Persian Gulf crisis. He called for the expansion of economic ties between the two countries and, on behalf of the Kuwaiti guidance [ershad—as heard] minister, invited a news team from the Islamic Republic of Iran to go to Kuwait to learn more about current realities in that country.

During the meeting, Mr. Besharati expressed Iran's reciprocal willingness to expand economic ties with Kuwait and also to dispatch a news team to that country.

*Net Per Capita Income Drops to Less Than Half

91AS1083G London KEYHAN in Persian 6 Jun 91 p 14

[Text] While Iran's gross domestic per-capita production (in 1353 [21 March 1974-20 March 1975] tomans) in the year 1356 [21 March 1977-20 March 1978] was 11,200 tomans, according to figures published by the Islamic Republic's banking sources, in the year 1367 [21 March 1988-20 March 1989] this figure (in 1353 tomans) fell to less than one-half the pre-revolutionary figure, meaning 5,550 tomans. An analysis of the Islamic Republic's economic statistics shows that production for the year 1367 (in 1353 tomans) was about 296 billion tomans. A comparison of this figure with the value of production in the year 1356 shows that the gross domestic product nine years after the revolution is about 100 billion tomans less than that of the year 1356. An economic analyst for Tehran's KEYHAN newspaper, studying the reasons for the drop in the nation's gross domestic product, writes: This shortage has two sides, first the fact that in general the drop in production has made the nation's economic condition more disfunctional than it was in 1356, and second the fact that during the same 11 years production was dropping and the population was increasing at a rate higher than three percent. The result is that if we compare per-capita production at fixed prices we will then better understand the seriousness of the situation.

Continuing its analysis, this newspaper writes: Existing statistics show that in the year 1356 each person's share in the country' production was more than 11,000 tomans, and in the year 1367 this share dropped to about 5,500 tomans.

The analyst for Tehran's KEYHAN adds: If we accept the idea that the level of a society's production is directly connected to its level of utilization of its various resources, we will then know why each of us is faced with severe economic malfunctions in the family and to the same extent in society.

In part of its report, the newspaper refers to the scandalous drop in the quality and composition of products. It writes: The quality of products is also relevant. These figures, which are dropping regularly compared to previous years, show what things are being produced. The reality is that in recent years, due to the chaos in the market of the economy and because of incalculable and record revenues in the merchant and broker sectors, something like half of society's production was in the non-productive economic sectors.

*Passenger Train Ticket Prices Increased

91AS1083B London KEYHAN in Persian 20 Jun 91 p 4

[Text] The wave of price increases for goods and services offered by the government has also spread to the Islamic Republic Railroad. According to a report from Tehran, railroad officials have raised the price of railroad passenger tickets on all lines. Officials of the Islamic regime's Ministry of Roads and Transportation announced a 25 percent increase in the price of rail passenger tickets, and they added that approval for the increased rail ticket prices has been given by the Supreme Economic Council.

In the last few months the Islamic regime has raised the prices of many goods and services for whose marketing the government is responsible. These goods and services include postage stamps and postal services, electrical power, water, natural gas, gasoline, telephone services, municipal services, notary fees, airline tickets, taxi fares, inter- and intra-city bus tickets, milk, kerosene, building permits, various kinds of foreign exchange, university and school tuition, cigarettes, and other comparable goods and services.

Nepal & Bhutan

Further Reportage on Strikes in Kathmandu

Workers Ignore Government Threats

BK1707153991 Hong Kong AFP in English 1244 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Kathmanmdu, July 17 (AFP)—Nepal's junior civil servants went on strike Wednesday for higher pay and more job security, ignoring government threats of disciplinary action and dismissal. A total of 192 non-official grade civil servants, including the chairman of the Nepal Civil Servants' Organization (NCSO), were in police custody Tuesday night, facing disciplinary action, an NSCO spokesman said Wednesday. The strike disrupted work in public services, courts and government departments. The spokesman said six members had started a hunger strike to urge Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's government to agree to their demands. One of the most pressing of five demands is for the abolition of a regulation allowing departmental heads to sack non-official grade civil servants outright, which was introduced under the former partyless panchayat political system rejected in nationwide demonstrations last year. Opposition Nepal Communist Party (United-Marxist and Leninist) or NCP (UML) members of Nepal's parliament voiced their support for the protest against the treatment of the civil servants by the Nepali Congress government, which took office in May after the country's first democratic elections. Maheswore Prasad Singh, the minister for general administration, told opposition politicians that the government would study reports from a soon to be constituted pay commission but was not in a position to meet the demands. The NSCO action intensified when the pro-Maoist United peoples front (UPF) also openly supported it. The all Nepal Free Nationalist Students' Organization also supports the action and has distributed posters here urging the government to talk with the NSCO to solve the problem.

Maoists March in Support of Workers

BK1807002691 Hong Kong AFP in English 1710 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Kathmandu, July 17 (AFP)—More than 3,000 pro-Maoist members of the United People's Front held a protest march here Wednesday to support agitating civil servants and landless people driven from deforested areas, witnesses said.

The demonstration included leaders of the Nepal Workers' and Peasants' Party, as well as students and leftist youths.

"We want the demands of the civil servants to be fulfilled" and "down with police reprisal," the marchers chanted.

They were followed by riot police but there were no incidents.

Later at Kathmandu's general post office, however, postal employees defied riot police in their attempt to arrest four officials of the Nepal Civil Servants' Organisation's post office unit. More than 200 employees submitted to arrest.

The employees locked the gate of the chief postmaster, Narendra Kotuwal, leaving him in virtual detention for more than two hours along with other senior officials.

Nearly 40 armed police officers remained on the scene but did not attempt to rescue the officials, witnesses said.

Pakistan

Former Kashmiri Premier Rathore Released

BK1807022891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1822 GMT 18 Jul 91

[Text] Islamabad, July 17 (AFP)—The central government released Wednesday the former prime minister of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, Mumtaz Hussain Rathore, state-run television said.

Mr. Rathore, an ally of national opposition leader and former Pakistan premier Benazir Bhutto, was sacked and detained July 5 after he triggered a constitutional crisis by rejecting the results of June 29 elections to the Pakistan-controlled Kashmir assembly and defied the central government by ordering fresh polls.

His release came amid threats by Ms. Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) to launch anti-government rallies in Pakistan on the issue of government proposals to seek emergency powers to fight crime in the country.

The opposition had demanded Mr. Rathore's release as one of its main conditions for a dialogue which the government has said it wants to hold on the law and order situation.

The detention had spurred demonstrations by Mr. Rathore's political workers in Azad (Free) Kashmir, the name for the Pakistani part of the territory divided between India and Pakistan.

A high court this week ordered the federal government to produce Mr. Rathore before it on July 21 for a hearing.

UN Five-Point Plan on Afghanistan Supported

BK1607122191 Karachi DAWN in English 6 Jul 91 p 7

[Editorial: "Time For An Afghan Peace"]

[Text] It is heartening that the UN is once again active in its quest for peace in Afghanistan. The Secretary-General's five-point plan, which forms the basis of the current round of diplomacy which has taken his Special Representative to Kabul, offers a tenable solution to the Afghan problem. For the first time since the Geneva Accords were signed in 1988, the fundamental issues are being addressed. The Geneva agreements were in reality designed to facilitate the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan. This was the foremost American goal in the region and it was achieved very smoothly, paving the way for bringing down the curtain on the cold war.

By focussing on the ceasefire and cessation of arms supply, the new plan seeks at least to put an end to the hostilities that have unleashed so much havoc in that unhappy country. More importantly, the Secretary-General's proposals also provide for a broadbased government in Kabul, elections under UN auspices and a return of the refugees. The plan can bring peace to Afghanistan if all the parties—and unfortunately there are far too many of them—manage to resolve their differences and reach a consensus. Now that a Swiss team has also joined Mr Benon Sevan's diplomatic exertions, one hopes that the peace process will after all get moving.

The situation in Afghanistan today is quite complex on account of the profound changes that have taken place in international politics as well as in the region. It is time those who have fuelled the bitter civil war in that country took stock of these circumstances. In the first place, it must be understood that if, in the past, the Afghan problem was a product of the cold war it is now a result of Afghan tribal rivalries. The superpower struggle for global supremacy helped sustain the conflict for a decade. Now that is no longer a factor in the Afghan conflict. Thus, it should be relatively simple for the regional parties to resolve their differences. In fact, the agreement on positive symmetry which enabled Washington and Moscow to continue supplying arms to their partners in Afghanistan in the post-Geneva period is to give way to a negative symmetry. The two superpowers have reportedly agreed to discontinue the flow of weapons into Afghanistan and the US has already suspended military aid to the guerrillas.

That leaves mainly Pakistan and the Afghan groups to reach agreement on an interim government. Given the internecine infighting among the Peshawar-based guerrillas, their differences with their compatriots in Iran and the confrontation of these groups with the rulers in Kabul, reconciliation among them can be quite a challenging task. At present their hardline approach makes it difficult to be overly optimistic about the peace process that has been launched.

On the one hand, they have been threatening to intensify their quest for a military solution by stepping up their attacks against other Afghan cities—Gardeyz being reported to be the next target after Khowst. On the other hand, the more militant of the guerrillas have refused outright to negotiate directly with President Najiboalluh. This would make the task of setting up a broadbased government difficult.

Although technically speaking Pakistan is not directly a party to this dispute, it exercises tremendous influence on the guerrillas who have depended on Islamabad for sanctuary, military supplies and economic assistance. Hence the Pakistan government would do well to use its influence with the Afghan guerrillas to make them agree on a compromise arrangement. As it is, the UN-held elections will ultimately determine the political strength of each party. We can no longer afford to let hostilities drag on in Afghanistan. It is politically destabilising and militates against our security concerns. Moreover, it is time the refugees were sent home. Efforts to repatriate them last year failed because of the continuing civil war. With the aid for the refugees dwindling rapidly, Islamabad will find itself increasingly burdened with the responsibility of taking care of the DPs [displaced persons] from its own resources. Given Pakistan's economic, political and security implications, is it worth sustaining the struggle in Afghanistan?

Iran Formulating Regional Arms Control Plan

LD1707101291 Tehran IRNA in English 0700 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Tehran, July 17, IRNA—Commander of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) Mohsen Reza'i said in Islamabad Tuesday that Iran is formulating a plan for arms control in the region which will be announced soon, the Central News Bureau reported.

Reza'i who was speaking to reporters in Islamabad where he is paying an official visit, added that the U.S.-proposed plan for arms control in the region "is a big ploy aimed at confining the Islamic and Third World countries."

"The Iranian plan", the IRGC commander added, "would embody the regional states as well. Even if the

U.S. and other big powers seek to pass through waterways of the Islamic countries they should act according to the set regulations."

No doubt, he noted, the Islamic and Third World countries would agree with Iran's plan.

As for the U.S.-engineered new world order, Reza'i said, "This is a big lie because the world is automatically proceeding towards a relative equilibrium."

"In fact", he stressed, "the U.S. has taken advantage of the weakness of the Soviet Union and has no objective other than weakening the Islamic and Third World countries."

Reza'i, heading a high-ranking military delegation, arrived in Islamabad last Tuesday.

Sharif Unveils Prototype of Main Battle Tank

BK1707130391 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, has reiterated strong commitment of his government to make the country's defense invincible with greater emphasis on self-reliance and self- sufficiency. He was speaking after unveiling Pakistan's first prototype main battle tank, Al-Khalid, at Heavy Rebuild Factory in Taxila today. He said the credit for this achievement goes to the armed forces and thanked the Chinese government and the people for their assistance in this vital field. Mr. Nawaz Sharif said Pakistan has the potential not only to manufacture tanks, but also fighter planes and other equipment for defense forces, and said that these objectives will be achieved during the next 10 years. He said unless the country achieves self-reliance in all the field, it cannot reach its destination.

He announced a grant of five million rupees for the welfare of the Heavy Rebuild Factory workers and bonus equivalent to the one month salary for them.

Sri Lanka

Reportage on Operations, Deaths at Elephant Pass

160 LTTE, 18 Soldiers Killed

BK1707113291 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] One hundred and sixty LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists were killed in Operation (Balavega) launched by two crack brigades of sea-borne troops to relieve the pressure on the security forces camp at Elephant Pass. Twenty-five LTTE women cadres were among those killed. Official sources told LANKAPUVATH that 18 soldiers had been killed and 46 wounded in this battle. They said that the troops who landed on Sunday [14 July] night at a point north of Chundikkulam were advancing toward Elephant Pass camp overcoming stiff enemy resistance. One hundred terrorists were killed in fighting on Monday and 20 have been killed yesterday. Among the dead terrorists were four LTTE military wing leaders—Kuttiar Kilinochchi, Rajan, Jeyaraj and Balaraj. Several terrorists who were traveling in vehicles were also believed killed by the Air Force. The advancing troops captured three tractors, gunny bag full of rifle bullets, wireless transmission equipment and 500 packets of rice and curry which the terrorists had abandoned when fleeing.

The sources said that the pressure on the Elephant Pass camp which is under siege from last Wednesday night has been considerably relieved and only a few mortars are now being fired at the camp by the terrorists. Meanwhile, in encounters in the jungles of Weli Wewa, 50 terrorists were killed while the forces recovered a large quantity of weapons.

450 LTTE Men, 49 Soldiers Killed

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["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, July 18 (LANKAPUVATH)—An LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] radio transmission monitored in Colombo stated that 62 women terrorists had 'sacrificed' their lives in the battle for Elephant Pass. The LTTE said 10 of those women cadres killed were 'officers' and gave their codenames and ranks. Meanwhile, official sources told LANKAPUVATH, an estimated 200 LTTE were killed in fierce fighting Wednesday as two crack brigades of seaborne troops battled their way to link up with the beleagured Elephant Pass security forces camp, bringing the total number of LTTE dead in seven days of fighting to 450. Forty nine soldiers have been killed, 19 of them on Wednesday. The Jaffna Hospital is reported overflowing with LTTE wounded. The LTTE is making radio calls for blood and 'volunteers' to tend to the wounded. A massive conscription drive is now on by the LTTE in the north and east.